

CAPE WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL.

Chairman. Mrs. M. Petersen.

Vice-Chairmen. Mrs. N. Robb and Mrs. E. Stott.

Secretary. Mrs. M. Stoy.

Treasurer. Mrs. B. Willis.

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Mrs. P. Duncan. Mrs. M. Henderson. Mrs. Landsberg. Mrs. J. Pare.

Mrs. N. Le Feuvre. Mrs. Newman. Mrs. M. Roberts. Mrs. Spottis-
woode. Mrs. B. Wiltshire.

GROUP AREAS CONFERENCE. 21st and 22nd February, 1958.

It is most rewarding to realise that the Black Sash is able to participate practically in an endeavour to suppress the implementation of this cruel and unjust Act.

Invitations to attend the Conference were sent to Churches, Ratepayers' Associations, Industrial and Commercial Organisations, Professional Associations and Welfare Bodies, and there were over 100 delegates and observers present. Delegates from non-European bodies predominated and it was an education, to one who has not much opportunity of coming in contact with the intellectual non-European, to hear the competent speakers put their points of view in such an able and restrained manner.

The following resolutions were passed:-

1. The establishment of a fighting fund to conduct a campaign and the formation of a panel of lawyers.
2. The formation of local and area committees in affected areas.
3. The holding of public protest meetings and demonstrations.
4. To call on all political parties and organisations to work for the withdrawal of the Act.
5. Continuation of the work of the present ad hoc committee who called this meeting and the broadening of its membership to include those interested associations who can work together on this issue.
6. To call on organisations not to submit plans for areas to the Board hearings and not to assist the Group Areas Board, voluntarily in the implementation of the Act.

The present ad hoc committee, consisting of representatives of the Institute of Race Relations, Co-ordinating Committee on Group Areas, Civil Rights League and the Black Sash, was authorised to carry out the resolutions. Among the Committee's plans, is one to set up a liason committee on a national basis and to open an office where people who are threatened by the Act can get legal advice on how to defend their homes and livelihoods. It is

also hoped to produce a documentary film showing the effects of the Act.

The Government has claimed that the Group Areas Act would lessen racial tension. Just the opposite effect has been achieved; in fact it is an encouragement to corruption. As an illustration of this, Mr. Doman, a teacher at the Athlone Primary School reported that an offer had been made to him of a brand new 1958 motor car, if he would submit proof that a man he knew was coloured. It seemed to me that Mr. van der Ross summed up the feelings of the Conference very accurately when he described the Act as "A sorry failure, carrying a terrific potential for racial mischief"

There can be no doubt that the Conference was worth while and constructive, and is the first step in a non-stop, nation-wide fight against the Group Areas Act.

R.M. Cossor. Pinelands Branch.

DEMONSTRATIONS.

1. At the opening of Parliament about 140 members stood in Adderley Street with banners and posters reading:-

THE BLACK SASH ASKS THIS FOR SOUTH AFRICA:

DEMOCRACY, FREEDOM, JUSTICE.

2. On Wednesday, 19th March about 120 members stood in Adderley Street with banners and posters reading:

WE CONDEMN POPULATION INQUIRY AS INHUMAN.

WORKING FOR THE ELECTION.

There are many complaints of apathy amongst the women (especially in the Peninsula) with regard to preparing for the election and help offered on the day. We do urge all members to go and help where help is required.

AGENTS REQUIRED.

Would anyone like to become an agent for selling the Black Sash book? Books will be invoiced to them at 12/9 a copy. Agents will retail them to Black Sash members at 15/- and to the general public at 17/6.

LECTURE BY STANLEY UYS ON "THE ELECTION AND THEREAFTER" GIVEN TO THE FISH HOEK BRANCH AT AN OPEN MEETING. FEBRUARY, 1958.

Mr Uys said the centre of gravity was shifting away from the Parliamentary scene. He said that every individual who was genuinely concerned to get rid of the Nationalists and to rectify

the wrongs they had caused, needed to work actively to restore good government to this country. Mr. Strydom and the Nationalists had "dedicated" themselves to the cause of Nationalism. Surely, he said, it was possible for anti-Nationalists to dedicate themselves to the establishment of basic human rights for all in South Africa, and that this was a far more inspiring cause than that of Nationalism.

That individuals by their efforts can succeed where governments fail, was demonstrated in Johannesburg during the bus boycott. Individual Europeans assisted the African workers by giving them lifts and negotiated with the Johannesburg Council and Chamber of Commerce to find a peaceful solution.

Mr. Uys said one could expect increased opposition to the political activities of non-whites (activities which have always been non-violent and undertaken to show opposition to oppressive laws in the hope of influencing the voters to elect a government which would show proper regard for their rights.

In their efforts to silence non-white opposition, the Government is limiting all the legitimate methods of protest as they occur. The Defiance Campaign (which was nothing more than passive resistance to certain apartheid laws and in which large numbers of non-whites had willingly suffered imprisonment to show their opposition) was defeated by the passing of the drastic Criminal Law Amendment Act (under which resisters can be condemned to three years imprisonment, lashes and/or a heavy fine). Many of the leaders who took part in the "Congress of the People" (one of the purposes of which was to make known the aspirations of the non-whites) have been charged with high treason. Consequently, for effective opposition the non-whites are having to concentrate on certain confined spheres. This means they must focus their attention on their labour (one of the only non-violent methods left to them. Strike action by Africans in this country has already been made illegal. Since Mr Uys gave his talk, a National Workers Conference called by the Congress movements has called for a "Stay at Home" protest. Mr. Uys appealed to us as intelligent whites NOT to be "panicked" because, if we were, we would only be playing right into the hands of the Nationalists. He gave the bus boycott as an example of what whites can achieve if they refuse to be "panicked" and take negotiation out of the hands of the government.

When non-whites demonstrate in the future, he urged us not to lose our heads but to examine the situation calmly and carefully. The lesson we should learn for the future is that the part played by the individual is made far more effective if he belongs to an organisation.

(The remarks in brackets are explanations by the Editor.)

VIGILANCE.

Simonstown is to be highly commended for taking up the case of an Indian who appears to have been victimised by a previous Town Council. The Indian rented his shop to a previous Mayor, and when the Mayor gave notice the Indian applied to be allowed to open a shop there himself. The Council strongly recommended to the Group Areas Board that he should not be allowed to do so, although he owns and pays the rates on the premises in question and is resident in his flat over the shop. No satisfactory explanation for this decision was obtained from the new Mayor, so the Branch sought Counsel's opinion. It appeared that nothing could be done in law, but that much might be achieved by appealing to the new Town Council because if they would strongly recommend to the Group Areas Board that the Indian be allowed to open a shop there was a chance of the permit being granted. The Branch has therefore written a letter to the six present Councilors asking them to review and rescind the previous decision, for which a two-thirds majority is necessary. We look forward to hearing the results. It is by such vigilance that the Sash fulfils its aims of protesting against the removal of civil rights and liberties, and it proves how right members were to vote against going into recess because there is always work for the Sash to do.

ASKED AT A COUNTRY NATIONALIST MEETING.

I should like to ask our Nationalist Candidate if the fact that no English has been spoken at this meeting, means that he feels there is no room for the English-speaking South African in the Nationalist Party, and therefore in the South Africa which it envisages. Protestations came from the Chairman and both speakers, who said that indeed the Nationalist party welcomed English-speaking South Africans into its ranks. The Candidate confessed that he, like the Sash questioner, was not fully bilingual.

ALL BRANCHES MEETING.

Owing to the first Monday in April being Easter Monday, it has been decided that there will be no All Branches meeting in April.

Your Editors,
"BLACK" and "SERP".