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JUNE, 1961.      CAPE WESTERN BLACK SASH NEWS LETTER.      No. 17.

4, Oakdale,  
Main Street,  
Newlands. C.P.

Dear Sasher,

The past three months have brought one crisis after another, and have made great demands on everyone. It was therefore with double pleasure that we welcomed back to the Council after leave of absence our stalwarts, Mrs. Robb, Mrs. Petersen and Mrs. Birt. Mrs. Birt has taken on the portfolios of Demonstrations and Country Liaison, and Mrs. Petersen that of Education, while Mrs. Snitcher has undertaken to keep us informed of new Bills that concern us. Mrs. Newman is still overseas, and Mrs. Stoy has left for three months in England and America. She will be sadly missed at the Bail Fund Office.

This quarter has seen South Africa's exit from the Commonwealth, the preparations for the birth of our Republic - more suitable, alas, many of them, for a seige - and on May 31st, the celebration of the Republic itself.

#### Demonstrations.

The news that we were out of the Commonwealth, despite so many assurances, isolated in a world grown hostile because of our policies, was a great shock to many of us. Southern Transvaal immediately organised a march through Johannesburg to the steps of the City Hall, and on March 20th between 400 and 500 women went along the route they had gone in 1955 to protest against the Senate Act. They carried posters in English and Afrikaans with the slogan, "The Crime - Apartheid; The Penalty - Isolation." In spite of attempts at sabotage by a number of students a meeting was held on the City Hall steps, and addressed by Mrs. Hill.

In Cape Western a stand was arranged on new lines, and on April 14th, fifty Sashers stood on De Waal Drive during the Friday afternoon traffic rush hour, holding posters for the home-going cars to read serially, like the signs about picking wild flowers in the reserve. They read: "Face the Facts", "Condemn these Acts", and then followed a long list of the Acts that have blotted South Africa's record. "Pass Laws", "Group Areas", "Bantu Education", "Job Reservation", "Abolition of Native Representatives", "Banishment without Trial", and the rest of the melancholy list, ending with "Etc., etc." and "Help Right these Wrongs."

This stand was repeated on April 21st on the Main Road at Green point, this time with Afrikaans posters as well, and on May 5th on the Foreshore, when the first two posters were scrapped and replaced by "We appeal to you", and "Confer with non-White leaders". It was repeated again on May 12th on the Mowbray Main Road.

Somerset West, joined by Elgin and Stellenbosch used the same posters in their Main Street on April 29th.

On May 8th, during the debate on the General Laws Amendment Bill, 28 Sashers stood outside the Adderley Street entrance to Parliament with posters in English and Afrikaans which read, "General Laws Amendment Bill. Further inroads on Personal Liberty".

When meetings were banned at the end of May the Magistrate refused to allow a demonstration; so on May 22nd a single Sasher stood outside the same entrance to Parliament, holding the poster "Justice demands a National Convention of all races".

#### Banning of Meetings.

A meeting on Pass Laws was arranged for Friday, May 19th in the City Hall, to be addressed by Dr. H. Simons, Mrs. Stott and Dr. J. Graaff. Three thousand invitations were sent out. At noon on Friday it was banned, a fact that received much press publicity. Now that the ban has been lifted it will be held as soon as possible.

An Anti-Group Areas meeting had been planned for May 22nd, to protest against the removal of Coloured families from the Black River area, at which Dr. van der Ross was to have spoken, and the film "Notice to Quit" shown. It had to be put off and will be held on 19th July in the Rondebosch Town Hall at 8 p.m.

#### Republic Day.

After much deliberation it was decided that there would be no official observance by the Black Sash.

#### National Meeting.

In view of the uncertain state of affairs, Mrs. Stott called a meeting of Regions for June 5th. Mrs. Hill (Southern Transvaal), Mrs. Johnson (Natal Midlands) and Mrs. Pirie (Cape Eastern) were able to come, and there was a very helpful exchange of views on a number of matters.

a) A Multi-racial Conference that is being organised in the Transvaal, in which leading members of the Progressive and Liberal Parties and the Black Sash will take part, and which a few prominent members of the newspaper, mining and commercial worlds are sponsoring. Mrs. Hill hopes to get other independents, possibly U.P.s and ex-Nationalists to join them.

b) A Courtesy Campaign, started by Southern Transvaal, to press for courtesy to all, regardless of race or party, in shops, public places and private intercourse. A large number of stickers have been made, and it is hoped that Regions will take it up.

c) The Programme for the next six months. All Regions were asked to hold education meetings and multi-racial meetings, bringing together White and non-White, not only for political discussion, but so that they might get to know and understand each other. This is the best way of working ultimately for a national conference.

#### National Coloured Convention.

The Black Sash has been given permission to send two members as observers to the Convention that will be held in the Claremont Civic Centre, July 8th - 10th, at which the main subjects for discussion will be the status of Coloured people, a Bill of Rights in a rigid constitution, and the Coloured vote.

#### The Magazine and "The Road Ahead".

Mrs. Berman is to be congratulated on the excellence of the latest issue of the Magazine, and on its attractive cover, which will appear on several issues. This number carries a full account of the removal of Africans from their homes in the location at Kirkwood to the bare hillside of Bontrug, a move which the Addo Branch fought against so gallantly.

An anonymous benefactor bought the last 200 copies of "The Road Ahead", 30 for the Black Sash, and 170 to be donated to Provincial Libraries.

#### Education Advisory Council Bill.

A select Committee is taking evidence on this Bill, and the Black Sash has drawn up a memorandum and handed it to the Chairman. If called upon to speak to it, a deputation consisting of Mrs. Grant, Miss Henshilwood and Mrs. Marquard will do so.

### The Sikade Family.

There was an excellent account in the Weekend Argus of June 10th, entitled "Endorsed Out", of how Mrs. Birt accompanied Kleinbooi and Pauline Sikade from Wellington to seek a new home in the Transkei. Mrs. Stott received a statement from the Minister that officials were instructed to deal sympathetically with all cases, and were legally obliged to arrange for those who had no home to go to, to be settled in the appropriate Bantu territory, or to arrange for them to be employed elsewhere. But despite this the Black Sash, while realising the magnitude of the officials' task, feels, in view of its own experience, that only too often there is no such help for those endorsed out, and that a very great number have no legal right to be anywhere at all in their own country.

### Bail Fund and Group Areas Offices.

The Bail Fund Office is receiving an increasing stream of shabby, depressed Africans seeking the opportunity to work in the area. Unemployment is growing worse; and since the police have been arresting all "loiterers", there is little the Sash can do but advise them to go home until the situation improves.

A Group Areas office has been opened to help Coloured women who are forced to move under the Act, with information and advice, and it remains to be seen whether there is sufficient demand to justify its being kept on.

### Black Sash Desk-Diaries.

These will be ready by October, so as to provide you with the ideal gift for friends abroad, at 20 cents each.

### Press Statements and Letters.

There have been letters or statements on :- The Defence Bill, Withdrawal from the Commonwealth, Influx Control, The Education Advisory Council Bill, Alan Paton's Passport, Patrick Duncan's Banning, The Constitution Bill, The Coloured Conference, University of Cape Town's call for a National Convention.

WE NEED MORE MEMBERS. PLEASE ENLIST AT LEAST ONE.