

1 & 2, Atgor Chambers,
Ralph Street, CLAREMONT. C.P.

Dear Sasher,

The long delay in circulating this newsletter is very much regretted, but it is hoped that from now on it will appear at regular three-monthly intervals. All members have, however, received a copy of the Chairman's address to the Regional Conference in October 1961, which has kept them au fait with Sash activities.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE:

The highlight of the past few months was the National Conference which was held in East London from 7th - 9th November. It was there agreed that, in order to increase interest in national conferences, each region should be entitled to 3 delegates for the first 100 members, and to an additional delegate for each additional 75 members, or part thereof. This means that Cape Western will be entitled to roughly twice the number of delegates in future.

After a very lengthy discussion, it was decided to defer for a year any decision on the opening of membership of the Black Sash to women of ALL races in South Africa.

It was agreed that the annual national subscription be increased to R2. Out of this new subscription, the levy to Headquarters Region is 60 cents, as before. This not only pays for the expenses of maintaining the headquarters office, but also finances tours of regions and the expenses of the National Conference. The subscription to the magazine (which will now be supplied to all members) is 80 cents, which leaves 60 cents towards the cost of running each region, which should mean that branches will have to do less fund-raising in future.

After lengthy discussion over the Sash's attitude to racial discrimination, it was decided to pass a resolution stating that "The Black Sash, in its efforts to work for justice for all South Africans, categorically rejects discrimination on grounds of race, colour or creed and will work to change the attitudes of mind which are governed by prejudice." It was decided to petition the Government against slanting the news in the S.A.B.C. (more of this later). Delegates were urged to try and keep the Sash in the public eye, and to find increased Press support.

Finally, it was resolved that the Black Sash should establish channels of communication with the non-Whites to exchange points of view, and attempt to define and work towards a system of good government; to investigate the curfew regulations in each region with a view to having them lifted; and to ask Prison Reform, Social Services, the Red Cross and the Medical Association to make enquiries into the overcrowding of gaols in Pondoland, and that the Opposition be asked to make representations in Parliament regarding this last matter.

ANNUAL FETE:

Immediately before the National Conference, the fete took place on 4th November, and the fine sum of R1036.30 was raised. Lady Packer kindly consented to open the fete, and spoke warmly and encouragingly on the work of the Black Sash, describing us as a "continual irritant to the conscience of our privileged society". All Branches are to be congratulated on this heartening achievement.

S.A.B.C. PETITION:

This is causing great concern. Signatures were collected at tables in the streets during the first week of December, but the response from the public was not good, and there were two unpleasant incidents.

File AAO early documents

Mrs. Day is working valiantly, and often alone, at co-ordinating this up-hill task. However, Plumstead Branch, by going from house-to-house and shop-to-shop, has collected nearly 1000 names (out of a total of nearly 5,000), which is a magnificent effort for so small a Branch. Collection of signatures will cease by the middle of March, and petition forms will be forwarded to the Prime Minister soon afterwards.

THE NATION EDUCATION ADVISORY BILL:

In June 1961, when a Select Committee was formed to enquire into this Bill, the Sash forwarded a memorandum stating its objections, and requesting that a deputation from us be received. We were extremely fortunate that this request was eventually agreed to, and on 14th February, Mrs. Marquard, Mrs. M. Grant and Miss N. Henshilwood were summoned to appear before the Committee. They were very courteously received, and put our case lucidly, tranchantly and with point. The interview lasted about three-quarters of an hour. We are hoping to publish both the memorandum and the report of the interview in the magazine.

ATHLONE ADVICE OFFICE (The Bail Fund Office):

The Institute of Race Relations has very kindly offered to donate R50 a month towards the expenses of this office and to lend us their African interpreter two mornings a week. This has enabled us to have the office open every day and to employ a paid organiser. It is now being run in close association with the Institute; most of its case work has been taken over by us. Miss E. Rowland became co-ordinator on 19th February.

During the period January/February, 352 cases were dealt with. Miss King Hall, daughter of the well-known founder of the News Letter, paid the office a visit. Viscount Montgomery was also approached, but not unnaturally this invitation was refused, though in extremely courteous terms. It is hoped that other visitors from Europe can be induced to call on the office, and if any member knows of, or has staying with her, anyone who is interested, would she please contact Miss Rowland (68-3150) who will make the necessary arrangements.

NEW OFFICE:

The Regional Office moved to 1& 2 Atgor Chambers, Ralph Street, Claremont, right next to Claremont Station, on 28th February. Sashers will be glad to hear that the rent is a good deal lower (R.16) per month. The offices are smaller but are adequate now that Headquarters has transferred to Johannesburg, after 3 years in the Cape. It is hoped that the telephone number will remain as 66827. (IT HAS NOW BEEN CONFIRMED THAT OUR NUMBER WILL BE 66-827.)

FUTURE ACTIVITIES:

A public Brains Trust on the transfer of coloured education is being organised to take place towards the end of March. It is also planned to hold another Brains Trust on the Self-Government of the Transkei Bill, as soon as sufficient details of it are available. Members will be grapevined.

The Archbishop's Conference Committee is holding a Seminar on "The Case Against Poverty" on Saturday, 31st March, at 9.30 a.m. (lasting until 5.p.m.) in St. Saviour's Church Hall, Claremont. There will be displays of the type and quantity of food of the average non-White family, and appropriate charts and graphs. This should prove a most interesting exhibition, and any members wishing to attend should please give her name to the office. Mrs. Oliver of our Rondebosch Branch has very nobly agreed to do the catering.

WE RELY ON THE PROMPT PAYMENT OF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION!

IT COVERS THE COST OF THE MAGAZINE WHICH IS NOW GOING TO EVERY MEMBER.

OUR TELEPHONE HAS NOW BEEN CONNECTED AND OUR NUMBER REMAINS AT 66-827.