

JUNE 1962

WESTERN REGION BLACK SASH NEWS LETTER.

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S4390

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

the night of May was, as undoubtedly all Sashers realise
activity, and one, too, of immense interest in, and of
prestige for, the Black Sash. Its name has been men-
tioned again and again in Parliament this Session, particularly during
the debate on the Sabotage Bill.

VIGIL AGAINST THE VORSTER BILL.

The 24-hour vigil round the "flame of freedom" which was kindly
lent to us by NUSAS, commenced at 6 pm on Monday 19th May, and ended
on Monday 26th May at 4 pm. The only break was on the Sunday. The
vigil was divided into 8-hour shifts - sometimes there were more than
8 sashers in a shift, but never less than 4. Only two women at a time
stood round the flame, holding posters as they did so. This was the
longest continuous vigil the Sash has ever maintained, and all congratu-
lations are due to Mrs. Mary Birt who organised it in its entirety,
without losing her head - or temper! - and managed to maintain a
balanced supply of womanpower. Mercifully we were not subjected here
to the outbreaks of hooliganism and violence which were so shocking
a feature of the Johannesburg vigil, the press was keen and co-operative
and even Die Burger asked its readers to respect the women on watch.
There was only one slightly disturbing incident early in the week.
Towards the end, remarks of passersby became even more sympathetic.
The posters, in English and Afrikaans, bore the slogans: NEWSPAPERS
CAN BE BANNED FOR PRINTING UNWELCOME FACTS; VORSTER BILL STIFLES LEGITI-
MATE OPPOSITION; VORSTER BILL CONFINES PEOPLE WITHOUT TRIAL. Many
telephone calls of congratulation and enquiry were received in the
office, and unexpected donations of money were made. A stand against
the Bill was held on Tuesday 20th May in Adderley Street, with the same
posters. About 60 women took part and there were no incidents.

GROUP AREAS AMENDMENT BILL:

A stand against this took place on 18th April, also in Adderley
Street, and about 36 women took part. The slogan was "REPEAL GROUP
AREAS DON'T AMEND THEM". There were no incidents.

The Sash also organised a petition to the Mayor from 25 prominent
municipal voters asking him to call a public meeting to discuss the
effect of this Bill on the autonomy of the Municipality. This was
held on 8th May in the City Hall, and on the Friday before a convoy
of 14 cars each with two hoppers drove slowly round the City /2.

advertising the meeting and distributing pamphlets. In spite of all this advance publicity, the meeting unfortunately was not particularly well-attended by ratepayers; however, a resolution was passed by the 800 municipal voters present, with one dissentient vote, and this was forwarded by the City Council to the Provincial Administration. This resolution briefly stated the voters' objections to the Bill and called upon the City Council to do all in its power to persuade the Government and the Provincial Administration not to apply such provisions to the Municipal Area of the City.

S.A. FOUNDATION:

As a result of writing directly to the 4 editors of English Provincial newspapers and a Conservative M.P. who were brought out to this country recently under the auspices of the S.A. Foundation, an interview was arranged with them on the 16th April. The time allotted was unfortunately only 3/4 of an hour. Mrs. Stott supported by Mrs. Petersen and Mrs. Robb found them ready to hear all points of view and with very few preconceived ideas about this country. The Sash delegation pointed out to them the level of poverty of Africans, the inequality of pensions, disability and unemployment grants, the disastrous effect of the Pass Laws and dissatisfaction with the Bantu Education Act. They appeared interested in what had been told them, and appropriate literature has been sent them.

A letter was written to the S.A. Foundation in March, asking for an interview, as it is felt that the Foundation is not presenting a true picture of South Africa to the rest of the world. No reply has as yet been received. A further letter has been sent.

S.A.B.C. PETITION:

A total of over 5000 signatures from Cape Western Region were sent to Headquarters at the end of March. All the petitions will be forwarded to the Prime Minister.

SALE OF LIQUOR IN TOWNSHIPS:

A telegram was sent to the City Council whilst it was debating this so-called amenity, which is vigorously opposed by the inhabitants of the townships, urging the Council to abide by the wishes of the Africans. Entirely because of a sheaf of similar wires, the matter was referred back to the Native Affairs Committee for further consideration. Nothing further has yet been heard.

ATHLONE ADVICE OFFICE:

Miss Rowland was unfortunately unable to take on the post of co-ordinator permanently. Mrs. S. Parks of the Pinelands Branch then courageously agreed to take over the job on an official/temporary basis. During the period March - May, 812 cases were dealt with. Thanks to the generosity of the Institute of Race Relations, in close association with which body the office is run, a fine supply of chairs has supplanted the orange boxes on which everyone previously unhappily perched, and there is now even a carpet! Volunteers to work at the office are always needed, as case work has greatly increased over the past 3 months. It has been agreed that all workers in this office must be approved by both organisations. Interested visitors are always welcome; please telephone Mrs. Parks (693150 mornings only), to make an appointment. The report for May 1962 gives the following information:-

Men endorsed out - 56. The majority being those who have returned and cannot return to former employers.

Women endorsed out - 53. The majority are illegal entrants coming to visit or seek their husbands.

Miscellaneous - 203. These cases range from advice on how to get a house, how to change job categories, how to get permits for wives to visit, rent cases, servants given notice and no pay, to domestic quarrels, etc., etc. TOTAL FOR THE MONTH: 312. AVERAGE PER DAY: 15 Cases.

VISITORS: Mr. Oxley; two social workers from America; Party of Sash members from Somerset West.

Bantu Administration Department: The workers are received courteously and most cases have been investigated by officials.

Townships: Stricter control on women entering the area without permission to visit. Most officials seem to be more courteous and ready to help.

Lawyers' Panel: The cases referred to lawyers: 1 case withdrawn; 2 Cases remanded; 2 discontinued pending further investigation by office: 1 remand case is being defended by an advocate.

Special Case: Mr. Elliot Mandla: An old man who had been ill for months suffering from malnutrition. He had been arrested twice and served sentences of 20 days and 55 days for not paying tax and being illegally in someone else's house.

He was sent to4

He was sent to various officials who "passed the buck" to someone else over a period of days. Finally a week later a worker spent the entire day driving him to interview officials. He went from Nyanga clinic to the Registration Office, then to the B.A.D. Welfare, to the Chief Commissioner, back to Welfare, to the District Surgeon at Wynberg, back to the B.A.D. then finally back to Nyanga. He was given injections and vitamin pills, a food parcel and finally a form stating he qualified for permanent residence and an application for a 12 mths. disability grant has been made. Without the help from this office, this old man would probably have spent his remaining years in and out of prison and would have starved from lack of food.

COLOURED EDUCATION BRAINS TRUST.

After a great deal of hard but frustrating spadework by Mrs. Petersen, it has been decided to postpone this until the Bill is promulgated. When it is held, it is hoped that it will take the form of a debate, with a leader and a seconder speaking for and against the transfer of Coloured education. It seems that the Coloured community is apathetic and great difficulty has been experienced in finding a speaker to support the bill.

LETTERS TO THE PRESS:

A letter has been sent to the London "Sunday Times" refuting Lord Montgomery's recent article in that paper stating that the Bantu do want apartheid. A letter condemning Job Reservation appeared in the Cape Argus on 9th March.

A letter on	Patrick Duncan	Argus	May 9th 1962.
" " "	Dr. Verwoerd's comments on the forthcoming Conference by Inst. of Race Relations.	Cape Times	May 10th "
" " "	Mr. Pelsler, Nat. M.P.'s statement in Parliament re Japanese and Group Areas.	"	May 17th "
" " "	Die Burger's leading article "Rockless Campaign".	"	June 5th "
" " "	Protest Vorater Bill	"	" " "

MISCELLANEOUS: A copy of the Constitution is held by the Chairman of each Branch.

The Sash was seven years old on May 25th 1962!