

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

Dear Member,

Our apologies for the lateness of this letter, the result of holidays and absences.

THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE: was held on 28th October, with an encouraging number of members other than delegates present. There was much useful discussion arising mostly out of resolutions both regional and those that had been sent in for the National Conference, from our own and other regions. The following members were elected to the Regional Council for the New Year:-

Mrs. M. Birt	Miss N. Henshilwood	Mrs. M. Stoy
Mrs. R. Coplans	Mrs. D. Landsberg	Mrs. B. Willis
Miss M. Dreyer	Mrs. M. Marquard	Mrs. M. Wilson
Mrs. M. Grant	Mrs. M. Petersen	Miss A. Windham
Mrs. M. Green	Mrs. M. Roberts	Mrs. B. Wilks
Mrs. M. Henderson	Mrs. N. Robb	Mrs. M. Schurr
Miss E. Henschel	Mrs. E. Stott	

Mrs. M. Henderson has accepted chairmanship.

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE: This was held during the first week of November at Westville, near Durban. It was beautifully organised, and the thanks of all the delegates will go to Natal Coastal Region for their warm hospitality and excellent arrangements.

Thanks to the new system of a pro rata number of delegates, there was a sprinkling of "new faces" at the Conference. The leadership of the different regions was, however, still in the hands of the same small band of dedicated "die-hards" who have borne the brunt since 1956, many of whom are very tired. It would indeed be encouraging if others would come forward to take their places.

A report of the Conference, and of Mrs. Sinclair's opening address have appeared in the magazine, but here is a very brief account of some of the more important events.

The resolution that showed the widest differences of opinion and called for the best debate was that on opening our ranks to all women. Although there has been a considerable swing of opinion among the leaders of the Sash in favour of this, it was clear that the majority of members in the Regions were still averse to the idea. Eventually there were 20 votes for, 16 against, and two abstentions. As a resolution had already been adopted that a 2/3rds majority was necessary to pass the motion, it was thus defeated. Border intends to bring it forward again next year.

A resolution that existing members should be allowed to remain members whether they retained their South African citizenship or not, was defeated by a large majority. In view of the decision against open membership to non-White non-voters delegates considered that it would be wrong to admit White people who were voluntarily relinquishing their right to the vote.

The most constructive thing that arose out of the Conference was the adoption of a resolution that every Region should get all the factual information it could about urban Africans sent to rural areas, where there is little or no hope of employment, and if possible set up an advice office to help victims of influx control. Both the Border and the Transvaal Regions declared their intention of starting advice offices, and have asked Cape Western for information and help in doing this.

The social high-light of the conference was a mannequin parade of Indian sari and national dresses, arranged by the Durban women's Cultural Association. It was interspersed with traditional Indian dances and music, the whole beautifully compered by a charming Indian woman. Afterwards the delegates were introduced to the Indian members of the Association and their husbands, and had an opportunity of talking to them over tea, and thanking them for a delightful evening.

A new departure at this Conference was a National stand by all the delegates held in the City Gardens, against bias in broadcasting, house arrest and the by-passing of the courts. This proved that even delegates to Conference can be silent sometimes!

THE FETE: The Fete on 1st December was very successful, and the total amount brought in, including donations from private persons and from branches who were unable to undertake tables was R1182.58, less expenses R20, which leaves a balance of R1162.58. This is R126.28 more than we made last year, and the branches are to be heartily congratulated on their effort. Everyone rallied nobly round the Regional Council, and filled its stall to overflowing with needlework. What remained unsold is being stored for the next Fete. The details of the total amount that came in are as follows:-

Delicatessen R270.47½; Needlework R182.77½; Books: Rondebosch R161.72; Cakes R136.43; Produce R80.92½; White Elephants R79.72; Stamps R10; Sweets R27.71½; Flowers R28.90; Teas R34.; Tombola R90; Books: Simonstown R46.82.

Donations: Beaufort West Branch R18; Sea Point members R9; Hermanus members R5.10.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY: 10TH DECEMBER 1962. In the late afternoon a stand was held on the islands in Sir Lowry Road, opposite the old Morning Market, with about 40 posters etc. (see p. 4).

In the evening the Sash was represented at a meeting called by the Civil Rights League. It is unfortunate that it was very poorly attended, the more so as Mrs. Ballinger gave an excellent address.

ENQUIRY INTO PAARL RIOTS: Just before going into recess the Regional Council was able to submit a Memorandum to the Commission on behalf of the Black Sash on the background causes of unrest.

Mrs. Pearce of Wellington indicated that she wished to give evidence to the Commission on her own account. She was able to speak from extensive acquaintance with conditions, gathered in the course of her courageous and tireless efforts to help Africans in trouble under the Pass Laws. The Commissioner thanked her for coming forward, and the Regional Council congratulated her on her moral courage. Mrs. Pearce told the Commissioner that she spoke not as a member of the Black Sash but in her private capacity.

Mrs. Stott attended a number of the sittings in Cape Town.

CHRISTMAS DEMONSTRATION: Acting on a resolution taken at the National Conference fifteen anonymous members of the Black Sash spent Christmas and Boxing days in isolated retreat, living on bread and water and observing complete silence. They had voluntarily cut themselves off from their homes and families and their family celebrations as a gesture of sympathy with African women who are separated from their menfolk and whose families are divided and broken by the laws of the country. They wished to identify themselves with these women by experiencing some small part of their privations, and they hoped that they would help to make White South Africans

aware of what is being done in their name to their fellow countrymen.

A statement was given to the Press, and both here and in Johannesburg and Durban the demonstration was sympathetically reported and there were excellent leading articles in the Cape Times and the Natal Daily News. An article in Spark was particularly welcome as not many Africans read the "white" papers.

Letters and telegrams of sympathy were received from several individual members and regions, and Mrs. Sinclair wrote a letter on behalf of Headquarters, of congratulation and gratitude for this "act of humility and compassion". Mrs. Jossie Hertslet suggested that every women's organisation be got to join in a plea for Bantu home life, and in a determination that "migrant labour must go". The Council will make every effort to get in touch with English and Afrikaans speaking organisations, and discuss with them what steps can be taken.

LETTER OF APPEAL: A Letter of Appeal was sent out last November asking for donations for the work of the Black Sash. Before Christmas we received R94.20 and soon after Christmas another R559.80. By the end of January a total of R604. had been received and at the time of going to press the total was R654. It is some years since we sent out our last appeal, and these gifts are very welcome and much needed.

ATHLONE ADVICE OFFICE: Telephone 69-3150 mornings only. Mrs. Parks continues to do wonderful work as secretary. There are 28 voluntary workers but there is still need for more volunteers to work one morning a week. Those who join the work are given the training, information and help they need for it, and those who are in it feel that it is the most worthwhile work the Sash has undertaken. Its value to the Africans is shown in the numbers who are constantly coming to the office, in spite of the fact that the law, to our sorrow, prevents us from being of effective assistance to the majority of them. During the six months ending last October 2,268 in all were interviewed, of whom 1,345 were new cases, and 923 people who returned for further help, or whose cases demanded further attention. Of these 817 men and women were endorsed out. It is still sometimes possible to help individuals by interviewing the authorities and in other ways, but even when we can do nothing the mere fact of being there to listen patiently and sympathetically and to give what advice is possible, creates a fund of goodwill that is very valuable.

We remind members that visitors, from home or abroad are always welcome.

REMOVAL OF AFRICANS FROM WESTERN CAPE: Last year Mrs. Robb and Mrs. Birt addressed 20 meetings of various clubs and societies, on the hardships suffered by Africans under the Urban Areas Act, illustrating their talks with cases that had been investigated by the Athlone Advice Office. It is only by hearing of individual suffering that people come to realise how unjust are the laws that are the cause of it, and we hope that these cases may reach an ever-widening public, through individuals, groups and church or cultural organisations. A copy of the talk can be had from the office for 10c.

Of the families endorsed out to the Reserves Mrs. Robb had had news of only a few, and that has invariably been of dire poverty and the inability to find work of any kind. In view of the increased stringency with which wives are being sent out, and workers kept out of the labour pool in urban areas, it is vital to follow up cases and find out what is happening to the people at the other end.

A contribution of R50 was paid towards the cost of Mrs. Maphela's appeal against her removal from Paarl.

STATEMENTS AND LETTERS TO THE PRESS:

OCTOBER: On Mrs. Joseph's house arrest. At the same time letters were sent to opposition parties congratulating them on their statements.

" Overseas speakers for the Race Relations Conference.

DECEMBER: On the Pearl Riots.  
On the banning of "New Age".

FEBRUARY: On the Publications and Entertainments Bill.

DEMONSTRATIONS:

16th October: Stand against the House Arrest of Mrs. Helen Joseph with posters: "House arrest without trial is unjust".

10th December: Human Rights Day: Stand along centre islands opposite old early morning market with about 40 posters setting forth the human rights that Western Democracy supports, such as the right to work, to freedom of speech, association, family life and many others.

31st January: Stand against Publications and Entertainments Bill with posters: "Censorship chains Freedom of Speech and Expression" and "Censorship muzzles unpalatable truths".

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