

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

Dear Member,

There is a powerful Chinese curse which says, "May you live in interesting times!" These last months have been painfully full of interest - the passing of the Censorship and the General Laws Amendment Bills, and the introduction of different versions of the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill. The General Laws Amendment Act, to quote Mrs. Suzman, spells the end of the rule of law in South Africa; and the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill destroys all security for Africans among us. But the gloom has been lightened by the courage and integrity of those who have fought against these measures in whatever way they could. Most notable has been Mrs. Suzman, (whom we are proud to say is a member of the Black Sash) alone against the rest of the House in voting against all the readings of the General Laws Amendment Bill, a stand that warmed our hearts and strengthened our courage.

CENSORSHIP BILL BRAINS TRUST: A Brains Trust on this Bill was held in the Claremont Civic Centre on 5th March, with Mr. Bagnall as Question Master, and Prof. Beinart, Dr. Jonker, M.P., and Messrs. "Blaar" Coetzee, M.P., Gerald Gordon, Uys Krige and Leo Marquard taking part. The presence of the two Nationalist M.P.s ensured a very lively discussion.

GENERAL LAWS AMENDMENT BILL: A token stand took place on the evening of April 17th from 8 - 9.30 p.m., and early on April 19th Sashers stood at 16 points of entry into Cape Town with posters advertising a Protest Meeting during the lunch hour in the Drill Hall. The speakers were Mr. Justice Blackwell, Mr. Alan Paton, Mrs. M. Roberts, Mr. Peter Horwitz, Mr. D. Molteno and Prof. Beinart. Mrs. Stott was in the chair. In spite of the short notice there were well over 500 people present, and after the speakers had finished the meeting asked that a telegram of congratulation be sent to Mrs. Suzman, and one deploring the Bill to Mr. Vorster.

Subsequently Headquarters sent a telegram to the State President asking him to refuse to sign the Bill.

BANTU LAWS AMENDMENT BILL: Copies of the Gazette containing the Draft Bill were sent to Bantu Advisory Boards, Vigilance Committees and representative Africans in the Transkei.

A sub-committee of the Regional Council studied the Bill with the help of two lawyers and drew up a comprehensive memorandum. Copies were sent to the Bantu Affairs Department and to every member of Parliament as well as to Headquarters, Regional Councillors and Branch chairs; and an abridged version was sent to Provincial and Municipal Councillors, leaders of commerce, industry and the farming community, and to churches and women's organizations. It was felt that the implications of the Bill should reach as wide and as influential a public as possible.

At a meeting held in Mrs. Petersen's house Mr. Molteno read an excellent analysis of the Bill and answered questions. Unfortunately there was a very small gathering.

On 14th May a Brains Trust was held in the City Hall, with Mr. Bagnall as Question Master, at which the Bill in its final form was discussed by Mr. C. P. van Lingen Froneman, M.P., Dr. Ralph Horwitz, Mr. Donald Molteno, Q.C., Mrs. E. Stott, Mr. F. S. Steyn, M.P. and Mrs. Helen Suzman, M.P. Again we were fortunate in having two Nationalist M.P.s and there was a large and appreciative audience.

We were delighted to learn that the official opposition took the unusual step of opposing this Bill at the First Reading.

ALL BRANCHES MEETINGS: In order that members may be kept informed on what is happening politically, it was decided that all Branches meetings should start at 12 noon, with a break for a sandwich lunch, and that there should then be a speaker on current legislation. On 4th March Mrs. Robb spoke on the draft Bantu Laws Amendment Bill, on 1st April Mrs. Grant on the Coloured Education Bill, and on 6th May Mrs. Jackie Beck on the General Laws Amendment ("Jail-without-trial") Bill. The addresses have been excellent and most informative, and the new arrangement is proving a great success. May we again urge you that every member of the Sash should attend this meeting, which is held on the first Monday of every month (except July and January) in the Princes Hotel, Newlands.

ATHLONE ADVICE OFFICE: In March 573 cases were dealt with, in April 400 and in May 434. There have been a number of cases of men returning from holiday to find that their previous employers have taken on Coloured men and cannot re-employ them. The authorities have been persuaded to allow a few to accept other employment, but for the most part they are endorsed out, even if they qualify. Our workers have tried to persuade the previous employers to take them back, if only for a short time, to enable them to be legally placed in the labour pool.

Owing to the general tightening up of the rules the Regional Council proposes to draw up a pamphlet for distribution, to be translated into Xhosa, giving information and advice.

We have received the names of some people in the Transkei who will follow up cases of Africans endorsed out.

A deputation from the Regional Council was granted an interview with the Native Affairs Committee of the City Council on 2nd April. It reported on the hardships suffered in the townships, and handed in detailed records of a number of cases. They received a sympathetic hearing. They drew their attention to the need for social workers to be appointed for the townships.

A sympathetic and imaginative account of a morning's work at the Advice Office by Lady Packer in the Cape Times aroused a good deal of interest and drew an anonymous donation of R100.

Workers are urgently needed for Monday mornings.

AN ADDRESSOGRAPH: has been permanently loaned to the office, and the stencils have been cut. Branches need no longer address envelopes, but are asked to notify the office promptly of resignations or changes of address.

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE: will be held in Johannesburg on 22nd, 23rd and 24th October.

THE FETE: will take place on Saturday morning 30th November 1963 in St. Saviour's Hall. The convener is Mrs. Wilks.

PRESS STATEMENTS: February On the Self-government in the Transkei Bill.

March On the Banning of Mr. Hjul.
On the Coloured Education Bill.

STANDS: March 19th Against banning, with posters:
"More than 150 have been banned"
"Bring them to court".

April 24th "General Laws Amendment Bill outrages Basic principles of Justice".

April 26th Advertising the Protest Meeting against the General Laws Amendment Bill.

STOP PRESS: As you will have read in the Press the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill as tabled was withdrawn and an abridged version of only 33 clauses has been introduced. Although the rest of the clauses have only been postponed, this does prove that widespread protest is worthwhile.