

Dear Member,

When we feel despondently that the Black Sash year after year protests against the injustices that pour from our Government in a seemingly unending stream, with little apparent response from either the public or the powers-that-be; it is some comfort to know that what we stand for has been considered worthy of comment by a trained observer from abroad. In a series of three lengthy articles in "The New Yorker" (Jan 27th/Feb. 3rd/Feb. 10th) of this year) E. J. Kahn Junior speaks of "a progressive South African organisation called the Black Sash". He calls the movement "the personification of the conscience of White South Africa". It may amuse most of us that he thinks we have been allowed to go on functioning "in part because many of its leaders are ladies of impeccable social standing"!

His account of the Athlone Advice Office ("a cramped and grubby installation on the outskirts of Cape Town") is sympathetic and factual, giving a description of several of the cases he listened to while he was visiting there. Had Mr. Kahn paid a visit to the Advice Office on the day we celebrated the 10th anniversary of its opening he would have had to retract some of his description of it: though we remain "cramped", we have advanced from being "grubby". With a carpet on the floor, pictures on the walls and a fresh and attractive notice on the door, the general impression is vastly improved.

Through our contacts and experience at the Advice Office, we keep in touch with the hardships and needs of those affected by current legislation. Much of this information, filed carefully, has been of great use to Mr. Francis Wilson of the University of Cape Town who is collecting it for a book on Migrant labour, commissioned by the Christian Council. The Advice Office is now run by Mrs. Barbara Versfeld who took over when Mrs. Parks retired.

REPORT OF ATHLONE ADVICE OFFICE JAN. - APRIL 1968.

	<u>Jan.</u>	<u>Feb.</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>
Men endorsed out	21	14	22	14
Women endorsed out	7	3	16	18
Miscellaneous	30	56	40	43
Old cases returned	<u>62</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>68</u>
Total	<u>120</u>	<u>158</u>	<u>192</u>	<u>143</u>

There has been a drop in the number of Africans coming for advice but we feel we are still serving a very useful purpose. Several cases have been withdrawn by the Prosecutor as a result of the Supreme Court case of Christine Mqandi which we won last year. These were women arrested for being in the area illegally who were able to prove that they were the legal wives of qualified men with whom they reside and who are themselves legally qualified to be in the house where they are living. We are trying to persuade the officials to recognise that these women qualify under Section 10(1)(c) of the Urban Areas Act and give them permits to reside with their husbands, so that they do not have to establish their rights in court after the unpleasantness and expense of arrest and appearance in court.

The...

The Advice Office celebrated its 10th birthday party on April 11th and also Mrs. Malindi's ten year's service with us. A tea-party attended by present and past workers including Mrs. Parks was addressed by Mrs. Robb. A very welcome birthday gift was a carpet big enough to cover the whole cement floor given by a generous donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

MRS. M. is a widow about whose case the office has been particularly concerned. Her husband had worked for one firm for seventeen years before his death in December 1967. They had taken pride in their brick house in Guguletu, putting in doors and generally making a home of it. When Mrs. M. reported her husband's death at the Registration Office during February 1968, she was told that she could remain in the house for three months. A worse shock was to follow.

Early in March she was instructed to appear again at the office, and was told to decide where she would like to be resettled! This was a bombshell. Fortunately, she is working legally for an employer who speaks most highly of her, as the best domestic she has ever had, and who wants very particularly to keep her. She works mornings only, returning home daily to care for her five younger children for whom she is the breadwinner. Four of these children are in local schools, and the youngest is only a year old. Two older daughters are married, and one lodges with her mother, along with her husband who helps with the rent, and their four children. Twelve people in one house is not unusual, it seems. All are to be evicted, and when Mrs. M. objected and pointed out that she was in registered employment she was told that the children could go to an aunt in the Transkei and she could then remain in lodgings while employed in this particular job!

After telephone calls and interviews with various "powers-that-be", Mrs. M. has been told that she may remain in her house providing she keeps her job and is regular with the rent. Her permit to be in the area has been extended to October. The official explained that she is not a "qualified" resident, having only registered in 1955 although she has been in Cape Town since 1940.

In view of the fact that this official had definitely established that there is no suitable home for the family in the country, he has agreed that they may remain for the time being. He gave a welcome assurance that no women would be sent away until it was established that they had a home to go to.

The following letter has been received from a man who has been "resettled" in Ilinge Location, near Queenstown:

"Madam, I hereby write this letter because I need your help desperately, (i.e.) anything you can do for me. I was endorsed out of Port Elizabeth after serving a two-year prison sentence, and thrown in this barren land. I can't find work because the employers won't accept me. Madam I am running out of clothes, I am starving. The place is very cold when cold and very hot when hot. Of course there is work here, pick and shovel which I am too willing to do if they accept me. I have been to the B.A.C. of the District, but all was in vain.

What must I do, can you please me, pick me out of this distress and endless strain shall I say? I arrived here last year on 11th July and I was employed all right, I worked for four months, I really don't know what went wrong, from then till today I am out of a job. I am unable to pay tax, last years and this year's tax, that means I will go to jail any time; please someone must help me. I hope Madam will put all this problem of mine in her deepest consideration.

Yours sincerely."

REGIONAL CHAIRS MEETING: This was convened by Mrs. Wilks to enable Branch chairs to pool ideas on common problems and to discuss plans for projects which might be undertaken by different branches. Some suggestions were:- Specialised studies of group area removal; transport facilities for non-White people; the conditions existing in specific townships.

ALL BRANCHES: The evening meetings every third month are still proving a success as more people seem able to attend these than can come to those held during the day.

Several most interesting talks have been given at "All Branch" gatherings: Mrs. J. Beck spoke on "The Troubles Ahead"; Mrs. Robb gave a talk on "The effects of Migrant Labour on the individual Migrant Labourer" and Mrs. Coplens gave her impressions of the Colour conflict overseas with particular reference to U.S.A.

GROUP AREAS PAMPHLET: Mrs. Willis has completed a most comprehensive account of the Group Areas legislation. This was done for the Christian Churches Advice Office in Simon's Town but will be of inestimable value to all who need to know details of this complex problem. Copies have been sent to each Region; anyone who would like to have a copy may obtain one from Mrs. Willis, Boulder's House, Simon's Town, 5c each.

ELGIN PICNIC: This raised the sum of more than R155. Elgin is to be congratulated on the success of their efforts. Despite the distance their members live from Cape Town they have loyally sent representatives to a number of our stands this year.

STANDS: The public has been invited to join our last three stands, and for the one on "Punishment without Trial" we paid for a press advertisement.

15th March: From 50 - 60 people (including five clergymen) stood from 12.45 to 1.15 p.m. at the top of Adderley Street in protest against Group Areas and Black spot removals. The posters read as follows:-

1. "You must not try to take a man's home away from him..."
The Prime Minister, Windhoek.
 2. Settled Communities destroyed.
 3. Black spot and Group Area Removals create misery.
- And a Banner reading: "Group Area removals unjust".

It was interesting to note the attention paid to the posters carrying the quotation from the Prime Minister's speech at Windhoek.

28th March: Again 50 - 60 people protested at the top of Adderley Street from 12.45 to 1.15 p.m., this time against Punishment without Trial on the day the Hoffenberg family left Cape Town. The Dean of Cape Town's support was appreciated. The posters read as follows:-

1. Over 700 banned without trial.
2. Innocent or guilty the courts must decide.
3. No punishment without trial.

Using the same posters, a small stand took place alongside the road outside the airport. For the 13 members taking part this was an uplifting experience: to have endless car-loads and bus-loads of people giving encouraging support and approval made a refreshing change from the usual sneers and jeers, and it made one realise that there are still many who share the ideals of the Sash.

Many Sash members were present at the airport itself to say farewell to Dr. and Mrs. Hoffenberg, whose humility and dignity and the response they evoked, made this a most moving and meaningful experience.

22nd April: A continuous stand in protest against "The Improper Interference Bill" and the "Separate Representation for Voters Amendment Bill" took place at the top of Adderley Street from 12.30 - 5.30 p.m. This was supported by the public.

In addition Rondebosch Branch held a stand on Rondebosch Common from 7.15 - 7.45 a.m.

A banner read: "Over 100 years freedom of political association destroyed". There were also four posters reading:

1. "Representation of Coloureds ... will remain in existence as it is".
Dr. H. F. Verwoerd 1962.
2. 1,859,000 Coloured South Africans unrepresented in effective government.
3. Division breeds mistrust.
4. Discussion brings understanding.

LETTERS TO THE PRESS:

19.2.68 (Cape Times) on Limehill Removals.
19.2.68 (Cape Argus) on Limehill Removals.
11.3.68 (Cape Argus) on Population Registration Amendment Bill.
11.3.68 (Cape Times) on the Banned.
19.3.68 (Cape Times) re press and radio reference to Sash stand - Rhodesia.
19.3.68 (Cape Argus) do.
18.4.68 (Cape Argus) Separate Representation for Voters Amendment Bill.
18.4.68 (Cape Times) Improper Interference Bill.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Wilks

BARBARA WILKS
CHAIRMAN.