

CAPE WESTERN BLACK SASH NEWSLETTER

Dear Member,

Since our last Newsletter appeared, several events of importance to the Sash have taken place.

1. REGIONAL CONFERENCE:

At the Regional Conference which was held in November, the following were elected as members of the Regional Council:- Mrs. Wilks (Chairman), Mrs. Robb and Mrs. Dichmont (Vice Chairs), Non. Secretary: Mrs. M. Barker, Assistant Secretary: Mrs. Burton, Treasurer: Mrs. B. Slater, Mrs. Aitchison, Mrs. Andrews, Mrs. Brock, Mrs. Coke, Mrs. A. Finsen, Mrs. Flesch, Miss Henshilwood, Mrs. Herbstein, Mrs. Kotze, Mrs. Stekhoven, Mrs. Turner, Mrs. Roberts.

Two resolutions were passed: A proposal by Wynberg Branch "that members take a more active interest in Municipal activities" and "that a committee be formed to go into the ways and means of making the Sash more effective in its acknowledged aim to educate the public (proposed by Claremont). There was also a discussion on "The value of protest and the role the Sash has played and could play in the future". This was also put forward by Rondebosch.

Our speaker at the Conference was the Rev. A. Hendricks who spoke on the "Psychological, Sociological and Economic effects of Group Areas Removals".

11. Instead of a National Conference this year, a meeting of Regional Chairs was held in East London in October. At this conference a re-allocation of the R2000 annual grant from the Bantu Welfare Trust was earmarked as grants of R500 each may have to be made to Durban and Port Elizabeth where new Advice Offices will shortly be opened. Transvaal will receive R600 and Cape Western R400 this year.

Further attempts will be made to educate members in the aims and objects of the Black Sash.

Membership of the Sash will henceforth be limited to women resident in South Africa.

### ATHLONE ADVICE OFFICE

Mrs. Versfeld addressed a Rotary Club on the work of the Advice Office. Her report to the Institute of Race Relations received high praise.

Mrs. Robb will pay a visit to Port Elizabeth where Black Sash members would like to start an Advice Office and need help.

African widows in Cape Peninsula townships have appalling burdens. On top of the threat and often the fact of eviction from houses in which they have built up family homes, they are very commonly offered the choice between sending the children (usually born here) to relatives in the Transkei or Ciskei, while remaining here on their own as breadwinners, or going away with them, perhaps to resettlement townships. If the authorities feel that a particular widow merits particular consideration, providing she herself qualifies as a resident of the area, she may be recommended to the Department of Bantu Affairs for a special concession and allowed to remain in the house. This was achieved for Mrs. R.Q., after much difficulty but Mrs. M.B., aged 30, left with five children, is unlikely to be so fortunate because she did not register her presence in the Peninsula until 1959, although she came from East London aged 4 and was here from 1945. Moreover, she was transferred from the Divisional Council to the Municipal area in 1970, shortly before her husband's death. He qualified in the Municipal area, but she does not qualify in either, and the housing regulations cannot be stretched to accommodate her. She has been told to choose between sending the children to her deceased husband's family, whom she has never met and who live in the Transkei, and going with them to live at Mdantsane.

### REGIONAL CONFERENCE

This will be held at Callow House at 9.30a.m. on 1st November. The afternoon speaker will be the Reverend Abel Hendricks of the Methodist Mission. His subject will be "Psychological, Sociological and Economic effects of Group Areas Removals."

A CONFERENCE OF REGIONAL CHAIRS will be held this month in East London. Various matters of concern to all regions, including the question of "Application for Membership" forms will be discussed. Other points for discussion will be: Black Power: Overseas members: Black Sash and Political Parties: Representation at National Conference: Chair at National Conference (in rotation): Consultation on Social change - report of continuing committee.

ALL BRANCHES

Speakers at meetings have been:

- 1) Dr. Wollheim on the National Party's dilemma about the Coloured people.
- 2) An African academic on "The influence of the Urban on the Rural".
- 3) Mrs. S. Turner on "Race Attitudes in the U.S.A."

GENERAL

Wynberg Branch will in future be run jointly by Mrs. K. Knight and Mrs. Flesch.

Mrs. Robb will represent the Sash on the Churches and Organisations Committee, a sub-committee of the W.P.C.C.

A new addressing machine with plates has been bought for the office.

A sum of R5 per annum will be sent to N.U.S.A.S. as a subscription to their Newsletter.

Complimentary copies of "Sash" have been sent to a number of private schools.

STANDS

About 38 people, including some members of the public, attended a stand on 9th July for "Family Day". There was very good press publicity for this stand.

LETTERS

- 1) To the "Cape Times" re Dr. Koornhof's statement about Re-settlement camps.
- 2) To the "Argus" on proposed multi-racial convention.
- 3) On the banning of Father Cosmas Desmond.
- 4) Statement to "Cape Times" on Friday 1st October, 1971, re petition for Judicial Inquiry into the Iman's death and calling public attention to Section 6 of the Terrorism Act.
- 5) Mrs. Versfeld's letter to the "Cape Times" on the Removal of Africans from Bonnievale and Elands Bay.

Yours sincerely,

*J. E. Dichmont*

J. Dichmont.  
Vice Chairman.