

JUNE 1972

No. 52

Dear Member,

This quarterly letter is regrettably late and therefore contains some July items.

The Region said goodbye most regretfully to Mrs. Wilks who has served them so well as Secretary and then for many years as Chairman. Her highly individual blend of intellect, know-how and elegance leaves an indelible impression. Mrs. Grant thanked her formally at the May All Branches meeting, and members of the Regional Council gave her an informal farewell luncheon at the Civil Services Club, by courtesy of the husband of one of them. The money collected by members of the Region for a farewell present to Mrs. Wilks was sent, at her request, to the Rev. David Russell to aid him in his work in the Resettlement Villages.

Our incoming Chairman, Mrs. Andrews, besides having to take over from a predecessor of long standing and during a time of political turbulence, lost two senior vice-Chairman in quick succession to the claims of family obligation. Fortunately, one vice-Chairman, Mrs. Dichmont, remains at her post and is being assisted temporarily by Mrs. Brock.

The Region is most grateful to Mrs. Burton for accepting the post of Honorary Treasurer. Mrs. Slater continued her skilled work on our books until the annual audit was complete and until Mrs. Leonard was ready to assume the combined Office Secretary-Treasurer job. Regional Council expressed the satisfaction and gratitude of the Region with Mrs. Slater's conscientious work.

STANDS & NON-STANDS

1. Nico Malan Stand: April 22nd, 1972. Approximately 50 members stood with posters reading:

culture knows no Colour bar
Built by Public Funds - Reserved for Whites Only
(in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa)

on the opening night of Margot Fonteyn's visit.

2. David Russell: A small stand was planned on the steps of St. George's Cathedral to coincide with demonstration tables set up in the suburbs displaying actual quantities and range of foods given as a ration to destitute people in Resettlement Villages. Dimbaza was the example because newspaper publicity for Mr. Russell's demonstration of living on these rations during the month of June made these particular facts available. A Rondebosch work party weighed and packaged samples of the daily ration and made these packets available to the other branches. The daily ration was mounted on one board, flanked by a second board listing the main protective foods which were lacking. Explanatory pamphlets were prepared to be handed to the public. Although events prevented the Cathedral stand and delayed the proceedings, 10 sets of these

boards were displayed in various shopping centres in the suburbs on Saturday, June 24th, and were then moved to churches and synagogues. They will now be displayed in private schools. Considerable public interest was shown. The Argus published a good photograph of the original posters; the Cape Times and Argus printed our letter and there were news items.

Mrs. Sinclair, amongst others, supported Mr. Russell's self-denying action by living on these rations herself during the month.

3. Students: The Region signed a statement and called a stand for June 5th, 1972 to join the public in protesting against the breaking up of a student demonstration on the steps of St. George's Cathedral on June 2nd. Members assembled in the Cathedral parking area at 12.45 for 1.15 p.m. Wale Street was already crowded and numerous police lined the roadway and pavements. At about 12.55 p.m. members of the Cathedral staff relayed the information that the Chief Magistrate had banned gatherings in the vicinity except in buildings, with immediate effect and until midnight on June 6th. They urged those nearby to go into the Cathedral. About 4000 people did so. The Dean of Cape Town welcomed the crowd which included prominent citizens, University professors, students and many others. After his brief address and the singing of 'Ein Feste Berg' and 'Die Stem', we all filed out quietly by a side door. Students distributed pamphlets reminding the public that the original protest was against unequal educational opportunities. Incidents developed later. The Minister of Justice extended the ban, until midnight on July 8th, forbidding open air gatherings of 12 or more persons in magisterial districts throughout the country wherever these are adjacent to universities or other higher educational institutions.

On June 9th the Region published an advertisement in the Cape Times reading - "THE SPIRIT OF PROTEST WILL ENDURE".

4. End of Session Stand: This was planned for June 14th. The proclamation concerning protests entailed a fresh approach to the City Council for permission. This had not been dealt with by the 12th; the session ended suddenly on the 13th. By means of emergency meetings, interviews and a wonderful effort by the poster makers, we were able to mount a token stand of 10 on June 16th, with Mrs. Andrews on hand to direct and advise. After about 12 minutes, our legal adviser, on information received, warned us that we were about to be prosecuted and, mindful of the strict requirements of our permission to stand, we disbanded quietly. The Argus published a clear picture on the front page, thereby publicizing our posters very effectively. There was comment in the Press both here and elsewhere.

5. Rondebosch Common Stand: An extraordinary meeting of all members on June 26th decided to hold another token stand, on June 28th, on the Right to Protest. On subsequent information and advice this had to be cancelled.

6. Re-Affirmation Stand: On July 11th, 1972, the first available day after the lapse of the ban, a stand of about 45 members was held at the top of Adderley Street. A banner read "WE RE-AFFIRM" and below it 12 posters in both official languages read "THE RIGHT TO PEACEFUL PROTEST". A certain amount of quiet interest was shown, a picture was published and press publicity given.

FAMILY DAY

As the weekday preceeding the holiday was still under restriction, the Region held no separate demonstration but made literature available to the organizers of a large religious gathering on Rondebosch Common. Under the auspices of the Church and Society Committee our "Who Cares" pamphlet was printed without cost and distributed to churches for use on the Sunday prior to Family Day. A Family Day letter appeared in the Cape Times. Unfortunately, an article prepared for the Argus failed to appear but it is understood it was printed in a Durban paper.

RESEARCH PANEL

The bus enquiry material was disappointingly handled in the Press but research will continue.

MEMBERSHIP

Three new members joined during the quarter. A coffee party was held on April 11th for new members at Mrs. Barker's house and was addressed by senior members.

FINANCE

During the last financial year, expenditure exceeded income by over R2000, due in part to extra salary expenditure, to a special donation for African education and to the fact that no postal appeal was made to donors. This year by combining the posts of secretary and treasurer and by making a wide appeal for extra donations, it is hoped to improve the position. The Advice Office costs about R3000 a year and the other commitments approximately the same amount. Protests cost money and protest becomes increasingly necessary. The Black Sash has been called "that model of discretion and peaceful protest" by the Press, a gadfly, as one might say, in the ointment. We cannot lay down this task nor our perhaps more appealing subsidiary one in Advice Offices.

MORNING MARKET

The date is November 18th. It will be held in the Claremont Civic Centre, convened by a committee including Mrs. Shepherd and Mrs. Dallas. The doors will open at 8.30 a.m. As it is on this endeavour that the Region mainly depends for its annual income, members are urged to turn their earnest efforts to making it a great success.

ATHLONE ADVICE OFFICE

The Region sympathizes deeply with Mrs. Versfeld in the tragic loss of her daughter. Mrs. Versfeld is now on compassionate leave until the end of July. Miss Barlow has been attending daily and is a great asset to the regular roster workers. During Mrs. Robb's absence overseas, Mrs. Henderson is acting as Director.

The Advice Office has been extremely busy. Cases range from Workmen's Compensation and contract labourers' troubles to those of young people trying to establish rights of domicile and the continuing desperate struggles of wives and mothers to keep their families intact. There have been a few successes, notably that of Mr. Sesman Magawo, whose right to remain in the Caledon magisterial district where he and his family have long lived and worked was at last upheld in the Supreme Court.

ALL BRANCHES MEETINGS

April: Mrs. Manning, a Canadian-trained social worker, spoke on "Food for Thought in Guguletu". She attributed the success of her investigations largely to the assistance of Miss Sophangisa, in whose company she called on housewives. She reported that custom and conservatism as well as poverty have a cramping effect on nutritional improvement; she regards education in diet as vital.

May: Mr. J.R. Altman spoke on "The Trade Union Movement in South Africa" with special reference to the lack of it among African workers. He stated that his main source book was Muriel Horrell's 'South Africa's Workers'.

June: Professor H.W. van der Merwe of the Abe Bailey Institute of Interracial Studies spoke on "Brown Power" and was particularly co-operative in answering the many questions asked.

LETTERS in addition to those already mentioned:

April 26th, on the refusal of passports (Cape Times)

May 1st, on the case of Mr. Legodi (Cape Times)

June 8th, a statement to the Press condemning police brutality.

June 13th, in support of and commendation of the students' protest and their restraint over a period of tension and provocation.

MAGAZINE

The Region welcomes Mrs. Sheena Duncan back as Editor. The attention of members is drawn to the fact that, as Mr. David de Beer is now a banned person, the issues of SASH (Vols. 15 No.1 and 13 No. 4) cannot be lent or distributed, unless his articles have been deleted.

NEXT ALL BRANCHES MEETING: will be on August 7th at 2 p.m. in Callow House. The speaker will be Miss Jenny Curtis on the subject of "Wages and Labour" which will be extremely topical because of Wage Board hearings and University Commission investigations, and of the plain difficulty of living for low-wage earners.

REGIONAL CONFERENCE: will be held on October 9th, 1972, at 9.30 a.m. in Callow House.

EXTRAORDINARY REGIONAL CONFERENCE: will be held on Wednesday, 23rd August, 1972 at 8 p.m. at Mrs. Barker's home, "Cambria", Stanley Road, Rondebosch.

Barbara Brock

B. Brock