

BLACK SASH - CAPE WESTERN REGION

NEWSLETTER - MARCH 1973.

NO. 54.

Dear Member,

During the opening months of 1973 a number of issues with which the Black Sash has always been very much concerned have received extensive publicity. The walk of the Pilgrims from Grahamstown to Cape Town has highlighted the evils of the Migrant Labour System; the strikes in Natal and elsewhere in the Republic have brought home the exploitation of labour in many industries; and the recent spate of bannings has once again appalled those who believe that a man is innocent until he is proved guilty in a Court of Law.

This Newsletter brings you items of interest from the activities of the Region over this uneasy period.

1. BANNINGS. The Region has added its voice to the many who have protested at the banning of eight NUSAS students following the interim reports of the Schlebusch Commission. We are particularly perturbed that these banned included two of our members in the Western Cape Region.

Following the subsequent banning of eight SASO students our Chairman wrote in the Argus as follows: "Eight young White people and eight young Black people have been summarily banned without trial, the Black without even the pretence of an inquiry. But then to an electorate that is only White the banning of Black people, it would seem, needs no justification, not even so invalid and hollow a justification as that provided by the commission of inquiry into NUSAS". The regional council sent letters to the banned NUSAS and SASO students and has taken a decision to write to all people who are banned in future.

2. STANDS. Co-inciding with the first session of Parliament on 5th February, 1973, a lunch hour stand was held at the foot of Government Avenue, focusing on Migratory Labour. A banner reading "Migrant Labour must Go" and posters reading "A Home without a Father", "A Man without his Wife", "A 'Boy' not a Man", etc., and the fact that pamphlets on the evils of the migrant system were handed to the public, gave a new look to the stand and we believe added to its effectiveness. This stand was repeated on 19th February. On the 12th and 24th February, stands at the same venue had posters reading "No freedom without a Permit", "No work without a Permit", "No education without a permit".

Following the banning of eight NUSAS students a stand was held on 2nd March along the Black River Parkway between the Red Cross Hospital and Park Road, Rondebosch, catching the after 5 p.m. rush hour traffic. A similar stand was held at the same venue and time on 7th March in respect of the banning of the eight SASO students, and when a further five Africans were banned, a stand

was held in Camp Ground Road, stretching from the Wilwood shopping centre to beyond St. Thomas' Church. These stands were held in accordance with our decision last year to protest in this way each time anyone is banned without trial.

3. SISWA BANZI IS DEAD. As part of our "education programme", we arranged for a private performance of "Siswa Banzi is Dead" at the Space Theatre on 25th January, 1973. The Council invited members of the public who might not otherwise have seen this enlightening production, and there was a full house. The reaction was generally favourable and this is demonstrated by the fact that subsequent donations have covered a substantial portion of the outlay of R200 for the evening.

4. OBITUARY. It is with deep regret that we record the death of Professor Donald Molteno in the last days of 1972. Writing in the Cape Times, our Vice-chairman, Mrs. R.N. Robb said "We believe it is no exaggeration to say that the Black Sash, here in the Western Cape, could not have achieved, or maintained half its stature, let alone kept on the right side of the law, without the guidance and support and inspiration, the devotion to our common cause, afforded us over nearly 18 years by Donald Molteno. He taught us all we had to know about civil rights, about the iniquities and inequities of the migrant labour system; and so very much more...." She also recorded that in 1958 he assisted in the structuring of a resolution which gave birth to the Advice Office.

5. VISIT OF SIR ROBERT BIRLEY. During a short visit to Cape Town, Sir Robert Birley spoke at the Tuesday Club on 20th February, to which Black Sash members were invited. Those present shared in an absorbing evening as he spoke of his experiences in the administration of education in Germany in the years immediately following the last world war. The occasion was the more memorable by the fact that the audience included Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and his wife, Princess Irene.

#### 6. ATHLONE ADVICE OFFICE.

Athlone Fair - The Advice Office received some publicity when, together with the Citizens Advice Bureau, we were invited by the Muslim Assembly to take part in their Athlone Trade Fair. We had the opportunity to display posters, hand out leaflets and to enter into informal discussions with many of the visitors to the fair.

Cases. A very rewarding case was that of A.X. who first came to the Advice Office when he was endorsed out in May 1971, after resigning from a job in which he was not entirely happy. He was then not yet a "qualified" man, and his employer understandingly offered him his job back when the consequences of his resignation were explained. It is now over fifteen years since he first worked in the area, he has achieved Sec.10.1.(b) conditions and he returned to us to ask whether he can now safely change his job. He can.

Sad, however, is the tale of Mr. P. Mpn. an ex-serviceman who worked in Cape Town from 1945, after demobilisation, until 1971, when he left for his birth-place in the O.F.S. Thaba Nchu, feeling unwell and in need of a rest. He had no money to get back to the Peninsula when he felt better, so he took a job in Welkom to enable him to save his fare. In so doing, he spoilt his chances here. He got himself a single ticket to Worcester and walked the rest of the way, arriving with very swollen legs. He has not succeeded in finding a contract employer and only a special concession, rarely granted, could get him one from the Free State anyway. He cannot grasp our advice, which is to ask the aid Centre for help in the way of a ticket to Thaba Nchu... "But I have always been a good boy", says this worthy man of fifty-eight years.

7. AREA BOARDS. It is understood that Government Area Boards will come into operation shortly, to take over all the Bantu Administrative functions hitherto carried out by the City and Divisional Councils in their respective areas. The Cape Peninsula will then be regarded as one area, within which movement will be freely allowed. However, we have found that officials will not anticipate this new arrangement and if a man has moved, even with his employer, from one side of the Peninsula to another, he is likely to get endorsed out if he tries to change his job within 10 years of the move.

8. ELGIN PICNIC. This yearly event was held on 18th March and Mrs. Dallas reports: "The Elgin Picnic was once again an unqualified success. Apart from the gorgeous apples with which the name of Elgin is synonymous, the fame of the delicious fare on sale brought an estimated crowd of 400 people to enjoy the hospitality of the Brownes at Ridgeland on 18th March. After shopping, families dispersed in groups to various sites of their choice and enjoyed the lunch they had brought with them. The swimming pool and tennis court were well patronised, the horses and cows were visited by animal lovers of all ages and some folk just lay in the shade. We gathered on the lawn and stoep for afternoon tea - a time to meet old friends and make new ones. It was disappointing that more Sash members did not avail themselves of this opportunity of fellowship with people of all races.

9. LETTERS TO THE PRESS.

1. 1. 1973.	Cape Times	Obituary - Prof. Donald Molteno
23. 2. 1973.	Cape Times	Support for Dean King's resignation from St. George's Grammar School Board.
8. 3. 1973.	Argus	Protest at banning of leaders of NUSAS and SASO.

10. ALL BRANCH MEETINGS.

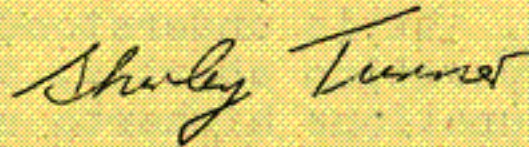
The February meeting was addressed by Mr. A. du Toit, Lecturer in Political Philosophy, who spoke on Civil Disobedience.

Those who were unable to attend the meeting will be pleased to know that Mr. du Toit has agreed to have his lecture printed in the Sash Magazine.

The March meeting dealt mainly with domestic matters and discussions on National Conference Resolutions.

MORNING MARKET. We are very pleased to report that Mrs. le Feuvre has agreed to convene this years Morning Market which will be held on 10th November, 1973.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs. Shirley Turner.  
Vice-Chairman.