

BLACK SASH CAPE WESTERN REGION

NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 1974

No. 58

Dear Member,

This newsletter covers Regional activities from the beginning of June through to the end of August and takes a quick look at one or two events in the near future. This has been a quiet period as the Regional Council was in recess during July and has had its numbers depleted by sickness and leave of absence for most of the time. However, there still seems to be plenty to tell you about.

Since the end of June, Mrs. Robb has been overseas and Mrs. Burton has been in the Chair with Mrs. Stekhoven and Mrs. Brock as her vice-chairmen.

PROTEST STANDS

You will remember that as a result of a Stand on May 10th, Mrs. Robb and Mrs. Raynham were charged under the Gatherings and Demonstrations Act and were to appear in Court to answer charges. The case was eventually withdrawn and the Black Sash has been left wondering what the charges would have been.

The Opening of Parliament Stand was held on Tuesday, July 30th during the lunch hour in Thibault Square as permission to hold it at the bottom of Government Avenue had been refused. This turned out to be a successful venue. Eighteen women stood with posters and another three distributed pamphlets which explained the posters more fully. The posters were gathered under a banner which read PARLIAMENT CAN and the posters pin-pointed the steps that a Parliament can take to bring about a just society. It was felt that this was a valuable exercise in spite of poor press coverage, as we had got our points over to a new public - different people from those who have been accustomed to our Stands at the foot of Government Avenue.

ALL BRANCH MEETINGS

On June 3rd, an evening meeting was held at Mrs. Robb's house, the speaker being Dr. Francis Wilson, lecturer in economics at U.C.T. Dr. Wilson spoke on migrant labour, but from a different angle as he told us about his own experiences as a migrant labourer in Europe and compared it to the situation in South Africa. A tape recording of this talk is available and highly recommended.

There was no meeting in July and the August meeting was held on the 5th at Callow House at 9.30 a.m. This was the first All Branches meeting to be held in the morning and it can be considered a successful experiment for in spite of the really appalling weather, there was a good attendance. It seems that mothers of school-going children prefer this time of day so in future every third All Branches meeting will be held in the morning. There was no speaker but a good

deal of discussion on Black Sash activities and a full report from Mrs. Brock on the Chairmen's Conference at East London was read. This was a 'mini-conference' where the Chairmen of the various Regions came together for consultation and to bridge the two year gap between the National Conferences. Mrs. Robb and Mrs. Brock represented our Region.

ATHLONE ADVICE OFFICE

Mrs. Sinclair, Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Henderson, on behalf of the Black Sash Advice Offices, asked for an interview with Mr. Punt Janson to discuss the problems of Africans under the migrant labour system and this was granted them in Pretoria on July 22nd. They were very graciously received but no discussion on specific cases was allowed and questions on policy were on the whole politely by-passed.

The Woman's Argus of August 8th published an article by Sue Garbett about a particularly hard case that the Athlone Advice Office had brought to her notice. This concerned a widow with children to support, whose only means of earning money in the area where she was legally allowed to live, was work on the roads at R5.00 a month. She came illegally to Cape Town urban area in order to earn a more realistic wage and eventually arrived at the Advice Office for help. Nothing could be done to get permission for her to remain in Cape Town but as a result of the article in the Woman's Argus, a sum of money was collected to help with the children's education. This money no doubt is very welcome, but it does not solve the woman's problem. What she desperately wants, and there are so many in her position, is permission to live where she can earn an adequate wage.

A decision in the Natal Supreme Court in the case of Mr. M.A. Zikalala that he should have been allowed time to fetch his pass may have important repercussions.

The Advice Office is asking for volunteers to sit in at the Langa Courts while pass offenders are being tried. Two people go to the Courts together - if you are interested, will you ring up the Office for details?

TREASURER'S APPEAL AND THE MORNING MARKET

The Treasurer's Appeal is an annual effort which goes out to friends of the Black Sash and this year there has been a good response to it. This is heartening but the Region still depends mainly on the Morning Market for its funds. Rising costs makes the success of the Morning Market therefore, more important than ever. Please help wherever you can. The Morning Market is being convened by Mrs. Coplans, Mrs. Aitchison and Mrs. Hacking and is being held on Saturday, 23rd November at Claremont Civic Centre.

Here are the stalls and the branches responsible for them:-

White Elophant
 Produce
 Teas
 Cakes
 Books
 Gifts Galore
 Delicatessen
 Childrens' Corner

Claremont
 Elgin and Somerset West
 Gardens/Sea Point
 Wynberg
 Rosebank
 False Bay
 Rondebosch
 Mrs. Scoble (Plumstead)

The Plant stall is still in need of a convener. Any offers?

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

This takes place on October 14th at Callow House from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and this year it will take a new form. Group expeditions to places of interest have been planned for the morning and you will already have received a circular asking you to indicate in which group you wish to be included. There will be six groups, each visiting one of the following places: The House of Assembly, Langa Courts, University of the Western Cape, Athlone Advice Office, Churches Urban Planning Commission, Hanover Park and the Early Learning Centre. Lunch will be served back at Callow House at 12.30 p.m., followed by group consultation and group reports back to the Conference. The essential business of the Conference will come later but adequate time will be left for it as the previous activities will have strict time limits.

TALKS

We have had several interesting speakers. The first, Dr. Francis Wilson's talk on migrant labour, has already been referred to. The second was given by Mr. Jan van Eck, the editor of Dourbraak, at a house meeting organised by the Gardens/Sea Point branch on August 5th. The third was held at the Rondebosch Congregational Church Hall and organised by the Rondebosch branch on August 26th. Mr. Rene de Villiers was the speaker and his subject the Publications Bill. In addition, Mrs. Henderson has spoken to the False Bay branch on the Dependants Conference and Mrs. Scoble has given a talk to a house meeting on migrant labour. Mrs. Scoble is willing to speak at any branch or group meeting on this subject.

POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Stands Questionnaire: of the 400 forms sent to members 120 were returned. The result was not therefore truly representative of our membership and its value limited. The findings were presented in chart form. Full cyclostyled sheets of the findings are also available. These can be obtained by any branch which might like to use them to stimulate further discussion at branch meetings. Any of the following are willing to explain the findings: Mrs. Dallas 61-4960, Mrs. Pearce 77-1882, Mrs. Raynham 69-4938 and Mrs. Rickards, Somerset House, Somerset West.

2. Photographic Exhibition: this exhibition will be held early next year convened by Mrs. Finsen and Miss Andrews. The theme will be "Coloured Housing".
3. National Conference: the next National Conference takes place in Cape Town from March 10th-13th, 1975. The Black Sash will be 20 years old next year and a programme of special interest is being organised.
4. Membership Drive: a membership drive in the region has been sparked off by the excellent recruiting pamphlet produced by members of the Rondebosch branch. Five thousand of these pamphlets have been ordered by the regions. In the Cape we are organising small house parties to which women of all races who are thought likely to be interested in joining the Black Sash, will receive personal invitations. Mrs. Burton is giving the first of such parties on September 19th and each branch is urged to organise at least one. As a boost to the membership drive, Claremont branch has suggested that the Black Sash might have a monthly information table at likely places in the suburbs. Suitable posters and leaflets would act as a draw and the public once attracted to the table might well wish to take a recruiting pamphlet or buy the Black Sash magazines or the Memorandum on the Pass Laws. Claremont will launch this plan sometime in September and we hope that other branches will carry on in their own localities.

With all good wishes from the Regional Council and a special plea to remember the Morning Market.

Yours sincerely,

M. Barker

Mrs. M. Barker
Hon. Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. I. Hervey

We deeply regret the death of Mrs. Hervey, for many years a valued member of the False Bay Branch.