

BLACK SASH CAPE WESTERN REGION

NEWSLETTER FOR OCTOBER 1974 TO MARCH 1975

No. 60

Dear Member,

REGIONAL CONFERENCE, MONDAY 14th OCTOBER 1974

This was agreed by everyone to have been a great success. The hard work put into the arrangement of visits was more than justified by the number of people who were involved in the activities of the day. The expeditions took place in the morning (except for the visit to the House of Assembly a few days before) and members reassembled for lunch. The group discussion and reports back came immediately afterwards and these were co-ordinated by Miss Erica Murray. The business of the meeting followed; the Chairman presented the Regional Report and the Treasurer's Report was adopted. The Regional Council for 1974/75 was elected and Mesdames Browne and Malherbe joined existing members. It was with great regret that the resignation of Mrs. Raynham was accepted.

Mrs. Mary Burton was elected Chairman at the first meeting of the Regional Council, Mesdames Brock and Robb as Vice-Chairmen with Mrs. Stekhoven as alternate, Mrs. Barker, Hon. Secretary and Mrs. Andrews, Treasurer. Since Conference the Regional Council has lost Mrs. Ruth Coplans who has returned to study at U.C.T. and gained Mrs. Birt on her return from overseas. Mrs. Dichmont was co-opted until National Conference as convener of the National Conference sub-committee and as Press Officer since the resignation of Mrs. Coplans, and other members made themselves temporarily available.

Mrs. Aitchison, who undertook the organising of the Morning Market, earned our gratitude. The Morning Market was most successful; the total proceeds, R4356-00, reflect the amount of hard work done by so many of our members.

PETITION ON DISTRICT SIX

The Mayor received the Petition in a very friendly manner as from "citizens" of Cape Town and he promised to send it to the Minister for Community Development. Although this was a "low-key" project to gain the support of ordinary individuals it was disappointing that Press publicity was so poor.

PRESS

During this period, particularly over the time of the National Conference, we have had excellent support from the Press. In November the Cape Times published a feature on 20 years of the Black Sash in the form of an interview with two members, Mrs. Robb and Mrs. Newton.

To highlight Human Rights Day a press conference was held at the Advice Office on December 5th with reporters from the Argus, Cape Times, Cape Herald and Fair Lady.

Mrs. Malherbe's article entitled "Homelands Development, is the Dimbaza model the Answer?" was published in the Argus.

Letters to the Press include:

Detainees	Cape Times	27/11/74
Price of Bread	Cape Times	3/12/74
Human Rights	Argus	5/12/74
Coloured Teacher's Salaries	Cape Times) Cape Herald)	9/12/74
Removal of Passports	Cape Times	11/12/74
Detainees	Cape Times	20/1/75
Squatters	Cape Times	14/2/75

Detainees	Cape Times	20/2/75
Removals	Argus	25/2/75
Opening of Nico Malan	Argus) Cape Herald)	25/2/75
Coloured Representative Council Bill	Argus & Cape Herald	26/3/75
Indian Students at Hewat Training College	Cape Times	26/3/75
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STANDS

We held two Panning Stands, one on November 5th and another on March 18th.

There was an Opening of Parliament Stand on January 28th outside Parliament and mini-stands in 7 suburbs; 3000 pamphlets were distributed. Distributors engaged in conversation with passers-by with a view to establishing a 2-way communication with the public.

On February 21st there was a stand in Thibault Square and mini-stands in the suburbs on Detainees with 4000 pamphlets being distributed.

During National Conference there was some discussion on stands and protest demonstrations in general. Mrs. Stekhoven's suggestion about distribution of pamphlets rather than the use of posters received favourable consideration. Transvaal Region organised a "walkabout" as the pamphlet distribution is starting to be called, referring to the Coloured Persons Representative Council Bill on Tuesday March 25th. This Region followed their example using the same wording on our pamphlet.

These "walkabouts" require a different system of organisation from the grapevine as it exists. Mrs. Stekhoven herself asks someone - usually the Branch Chairman - from the suburbs concerned to be responsible for finding the people to hand out the pamphlets, often at short notice. If this is something you could do, in your suburb, at a time of day convenient to you (we recommend between 10 am and 12 noon), please offer your services to your Branch Chairman. At the moment we are calling on the same few people far too often.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

We have arranged for the sale and distribution of our publications at a table in Claremont; we are still busy with our Cape Western Photographic Exhibition which we hope to hold in May. Two of the interesting Branch meetings held were addressed by Dr. van Zyl Slabbert on "the Role of a Small Pressure Group in Bringing about Change in South Africa" and by Mr. Johan Maree on "African Labour and the Importance of Trade Unions".

Many of our members were involved in Summer School at U.C.T., particularly the Migrant Labour Course.

The Transvaal photographic exhibition, "Who Cares?" - photographs by Struan Robertson - was on view at St. George's Cathedral from Friday, 21st March to Wednesday, 2nd April thanks to the kind permission of the Very Rev. Dean E. King and to the hard work of Mrs. Mary Birt and her bevy of undaunted assistants. It has now been moved to the Space Theatre.

ELGIN PICNIC

This annual picnic was held on March 23rd and in spite of the rain was a great success. This small branch expects to have raised over R400 and are to be congratulated on their hard work.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Three days of interesting and stimulating discussion for the delegates and observers, and of very hard work by those responsible for the organisation. The two public meetings were very well

attended and we felt that the expense and trouble involved in arranging the Brains Trust were worth while. I wish all of you could have been present throughout the Conference, and I hope that each branch will have an opportunity to hear about it from one of the delegates.

Valuable contributions were made to the conference in the form of discussions led by members and non-members - e.g. Domestic Wages, by Dr. F.E. Streek; Housing, by a panel consisting of Eulalie Stott, Paul Andrew, Martin Putterill and George Gibbs under the chairmanship of Pauline Pearce; Conscientious Objection, by Margaret Nash; Multistan, by Paul Malherbe; The Role of Women in the Coming South African Crisis, by Syndee Sayedwa, Shirley Turner and Rachel Swart; and The Deterioration of Race Relations by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi.

We derived several ideas for projects to be tackled during the coming year - study programmes such as research into the social benefits provided for all S. Africans, and learning about different forms of African Socialism; and ideas for action such as organising discussions and meetings between high school pupils, or education schemes.

The new National President, Mrs. Sheena Duncan, reaffirmed her belief that the Black Sash has a positive role to play.

Yours sincerely,

M. Burton

Mrs. M. Burton
Chairman

PLEASE NOTE: The National Council of African Women is holding its National Conference in Cape Town at the end of the year. In order to raise funds regular jumble sales are planned. If you have any jumble please contact Syndee Sayedwa, 6-8970 or Margaret Barker, 694401.