

INDIAN WOMEN'S DEMONSTRATION IN PRETORIA ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY (10 DECEMBER) 1963

Introduction

Fifty years ago, on 10 December 1963, police unleashed dogs against Indian women who came to Pretoria in a peaceful demonstration to present a petition to the Government against the Group Areas Act.

People in South Africa were perhaps too preoccupied to pay sufficient attention to this crime of the apartheid – two months after Nelson Mandela and other leaders of the people were charged in the Rivonia Trial. There was no international reaction as the news was hardly reported abroad.

I had been appointed in March that year as the Principal Secretary of the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid. I did all I could to promote condemnation of apartheid and escalating repression, arms embargo against South Africa and denunciation of the Rivonia Trial by the United Nations. But by the time I received South African newspapers reporting the Indian women's demonstration, the UN General Assembly had concluded discussion of apartheid in South Africa and delegates were preparing to return home. There was little I could do except to include a brief account of the event in the next report of the Special Committee.

I was outraged by the event and it has remained in my memory since then. I admired the heroism of the women who participated in the demonstration, knowing fully well the inhumanity of the apartheid state. Their courage reminded me of bravery of Indian women in 1913 – of Kasturba and other relatives of Gandhi, and of two Muslim women who discarded the purdah to defy racist oppression, and were sentenced to three months with hard labour. And of some forty Indian women from the Transvaal who exhorted the Indian workers of Natal to stage an unprecedented general strike to protest against an unjust and cruel tax; they also suffered three months with hard labour with Kasturba under miserable conditions in the Maritzburg women's prison. And of the heroines of the 1946 Indian passive resistance, some of whom participated in the 1963 demonstration.

In tribute to them, I have put together the information I could collect on the demonstration of 10 December 1963 so that this event in the heritage of the people of South Africa, and of Indian women in that country, is not forgotten. I wish to thank the late Mrs. Amina Cachalia and Gabriele Mohale at the Wits University library for providing me with most of the newspaper clippings which form the basis of the account which follows.

The demonstration was led by Dr. Zainab Asvat, daughter of Ebrahim Asvat, a well-to-do merchant who courted imprisonment in the satyagraha of 1906-14. He remained a militant all his life and served as chairman of the Non-European United Front in the Transvaal in the late 1930s, with Dr. Yusuf M. Dadoo as secretary. Zainab herself left her medical studies to join the passive resistance in 1946 as a member of the first batch and remained undaunted though bleeding from assault by white hooligans. Her sister and brother-in-law – Amina Cachalia and Yusuf Cachalia – could only watch in silence as women got together in Fordsburg for the ride to Pretoria; they had been served stringent banning orders a few months earlier.

The day after the demonstration Zainab herself was served with banning orders. She had to go into exile in London.

There were other women in the demonstration whose families had similar history of heroism. To mention only two, there was Manonmoney Naidoo, wife of an adopted son of Gandhi and member of a family which participated in the freedom struggle for five generations. And Maniben Sita, daughter of the great Gandhian Nana Sita, whose family too contributed several freedom fighters.

It has been the privilege of the Indian community that not only individuals and but families participated in the struggle for freedom of all the people of South Africa.

E. S. Reddy

New York

December 2013

1963- A Year of Crisis

1963 was a crucial year in South African history.

The apartheid Parliament enacted the “90-day law” authorising the regime to detain people *incommunicado* for 90 days at a time without access to families or lawyers. Hundreds of people suspected of underground activities against the regime were detained. They were at the mercy of policemen of the “Special Branch” who had been trained in torture.

The regime hoped to extract confessions and suppress the underground movement – especially *Umkhonto we Sizwe* of the ANC which had been responsible for several hundred acts of sabotage at government buildings and other installations, as well as *Pogo*, associated with the Pan Africanist Congress, which resorted to violence in the Cape.

The regime achieved some successes. *Pogo* was dealt a heavy blow and many of its members were hanged. Leaders of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* were captured at Rivonia on 11 July. Mandela, the leader, had already been in prison since early August 1962. The regime brought them to trial in October 1963 under the “Sabotage Act” which provided for the death penalty.

The Group Areas Act was being enforced, uprooting communities of non-white people from their homes in order to remove non-whites from the centre of cities and towns, and segregate them by “race”. The Indian people suffered most under this Act. Many Indians were traders or were employed by the traders. They could carry on little trade in the segregated Indian locations.

Members of the Indian community in the Transvaal observed 15 November 1963 as "a day of anguish and sorrow in thousands of homes". A statement issued in that connection said that Indians were entering "a moment of crisis" caused by the Group Areas Act and that it was "a solemn and religious duty to say that mass uprooting of people, no matter what colour, is against all moral and religious scruples".

More than one hundred Indian school children in Johannesburg were caned for having stayed away from classes on 15 November.

Earlier that year, the Government Indian high school in Johannesburg was closed in order to force the Indian families to move to Lenasia. A parents' committee, with Ahmed Kathrada as secretary, set up the Central Indian High School – with a faculty including several leaders of the liberation movement- and many of the students later became prominent in the liberation struggle at home and abroad.

The regime was at the same time creating separate institutions for different sections of the population in order to entrench white domination. The Africans were to have “parliaments” for each ethnic group in scattered reserves combined into what came to be called “bantustans”. The Coloured people and the Indians would have their councils. These councils would have very limited powers while the white Parliament would continue to rule the country.

The Indians were traditionally against such apartheid institutions. They denounced token representation by whites in the Parliament, which was offered to them in the “Ghetto Act” of 1946, and it had to be abandoned, while Africans and Coloured people took part in elections for similar representation. No Indian could be found serve on the Advisory Board proposed by the Government in 1946, while African leaders continued for many years to serve on the Natives' Representative Council, an advisory body.

The regime recognised that it could not hold elections for an Indian Council because of opposition of the community. Instead, it called over a hundred handpicked Indians to a meeting on 10-11 December to “consult” on the setting up of an Indian Council composed of members nominated by the regime. The meeting was held in Laudium, a segregated location for Indians in Pretoria, and was opened by W.A. Maree, Minister of Indian Affairs.

The Demonstration

The Transvaal Indian Women's Association called on women to go to Pretoria on Tuesday, 10 December, to demonstrate against the imposition of the Group Areas Act and the conference with unrepresentative Indians.

That date was chosen as it was the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948 and was proclaimed Human Rights Day. The delegation of South Africa was one of the few who did not vote for that historic document.

On 9 December, the Association sent a letter to the Prime Minister Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, requesting an interview. It said that the Group Areas Act and "the policy of apartheid in relation to the Indian people" was causing grave concern and agitation in the Indian community.

"As mothers and women we face a bleak future.

"Under the Group Areas Act our people are being deprived of their homes, means of livelihood and property.

"Hundreds of families in Johannesburg, Pretoria and other parts of the province are living under notice and the force of law is being applied to drive us into isolated ghettos....

"The policy of Group Areas is bringing misery, loss of self-respect and human dignity, poverty and squalor.

"We have no confidence in the Minister of Indian Affairs. He is impotent to redress our just and legitimate grievances. Instead of meeting the demands of the Indian people he is looking for 'yes-men' and stooges to implement the policy of apartheid against our unanimous wishes."

About five hundred Indian women from all over the Transvaal, some carrying babies, arrived in Pretoria on 10 December, on what was called a pilgrimage, wearing white saris as a sign of mourning. They met at a temple in the Asiatic Bazaar for prayers. They said in the prayers:

"Oh, God, grant us understanding, wisdom, guidance and love. We have gathered here to beseech Thee, God, to give us strength against unjust laws that deny us human dignity and self-respect."

Several policemen were seen moving among them and taking notes.

After the prayers, the women went to the Union Buildings in buses. Each woman carried a letter to the Prime Minister with her signature. It read:

"The ruthless application of apartheid is causing grave concern to our people. Its implementation in the form of group areas, job reservation and other measures involves loss of homes, impoverishment and assault on our dignity and self-respect.

"As a woman, I request you to take steps that will restore security to a people whose only 'crime' is colour and race.

"Significantly, my representation to you is on December 10th, which is Human Rights Day. A change of policy on your part might even restore confidence and respect for our country throughout the world."

Police tried to prevent the women from leaving the buses. But many of them managed to break through the police cordon shortly after noon and rushed to the West Gate of the Union Buildings leading to the offices of the Ministers.

When Mrs. Z. Saley of Krugersdorp was running to the Union Buildings, a police dog knocked her to the ground and she fainted.

Finding the gate locked, the women threw their memoranda through the gate and began to sing and shout slogans asking to see the Prime Minister. They were perhaps unaware that the Prime Minister was in Cape Town.

Police warned them to move to the other side of the road. They moved and sat down under the trees on that hot day. Soon, the police brought reinforcements and about ten police dogs with their handlers.

The dogs grabbed and pulled the saris of the women and several saris were torn.

"Mrs. Hava Saloojee, a 40-year-old Johannesburg woman, said she was bitten by a dog on the right arm. Miss Tilly Shireen, a deaf and dumb girl from Nigel, had a scratch on the left foot after a dog had leapt on her.

“Another dog leapt and pulled Miss Sayboon Motala, of Johannesburg, by her dress. But she escaped unscathed.

“A woman who was being pushed in the stomach pleaded: ‘Please, I am expecting. Don’t push me around like that.’

“Miss Hajara Asvat was arrested as the woman was entering the grounds of the Union Buildings. But later, she was released after her name and address had been taken by the police.

“The women generally, remained calm and restrained and chanted: ‘We just want to see Dr. Verwoerd.’” (*Post*, 15 December 1963).

The women left after 2.00 p.m. and returned to their buses.

MAREE WARNS INDIANS,

Mourning

WOMAN TURNED BACK

By the Political Correspondent
SQUADS of Security Branch men and dog handlers, guarded all entrances to the grounds of Union Building today, and turned back cars and buses carrying Indian women who wanted to enter.

The women, all dressed in white, intended to hand letters protesting against hardships under the Group Areas Act. As cars reached the approach to the building they were stopped by police.

A Johannesburg bus, carrying about 50 white-saried women, was turned back by a senior officer. When the women tried to leave the bus around a corner, they were warned not to alight. The bus then left towards the city with a Security Branch car in its wake.

The demonstration was timed to coincide with a conference being addressed in the near-by Indian township of Laudium by the Minister of Indian Affairs, Mr. Maree.

THEN ASKS FOR HELP

But council will "be nominated by me"

By the Political Correspondent

CERTAIN INDIAN ORGANIZATIONS and individuals thought they could help outside countries interfere in South Africa's domestic affairs, or help to overthrow the Government, said the Minister of Indian Affairs, Mr. Maree, in Pretoria today.

He added that "passive resisters, Leftist agitators and fellow trouble-makers" could only create a feeling of animosity towards Indians generally. Mr. Maree was opening the conference called to establish a National Indian Council.

He said that because of "agitation, intimidation and internal strife" democratically elected leaders of the Indian community could scarcely be found.

The Government had, therefore, decided to invite delegates to the conference because of a "dire need for consultation."

SHALL GO AHEAD

Then Mr. Maree warned the delegates: "If the required co-operation is still withheld it will not mean that I shall refrain from going ahead with the task entrusted to me. But I shall do so as I see fit and nobody will be entitled to accuse me then of taking matters into my own hands without first having consulted you."

Mr. Maree said the proposed council could "pave the way for an eventual democratically-elected council," which in time would control those affairs of the Indian community as might be delegated to it by parliament.

Initially it would serve as a body through which the government could consult the Indian community. It would consist of about 15 members "nominated by me — perhaps from a list submitted by this conference."

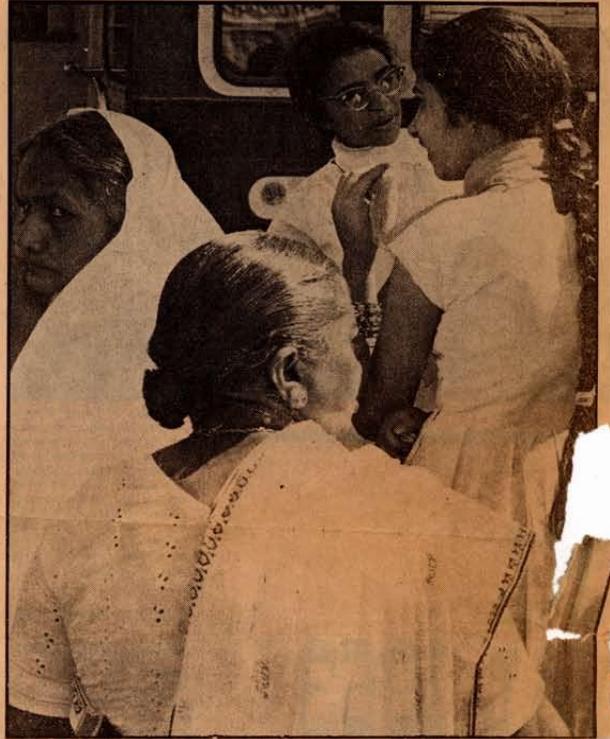
Then Mr. Maree said: "I do not want people imbued with a spirit of negative destruction."

Among matters upon which

the council would be consulted were:

- How it could be developed into an elected body "with powers to legislate and administer";
- Improvement of school facilities;
- Establishment of local government "for Indians and by Indians in their own cities, towns and residential areas";
- Giving Indians a share in industrial development;
- Establishing Indian-run hospitals;
- Care for the aged and infirm;
- Creation of more employment facilities.

"It is not easy for the Government to engender this adjustment of outlook among its followers, who for many years were used to seeing that the Indians are a foreign people who should go back to their countries of origin," said the Minister.



Some of the Indian women and children who left Johannesburg today on a "pilgrimage" to the Union Buildings. Most of the women wore white saris as a sign of mourning they said for the suffering they are experiencing under the Group Areas Act. They said they hoped to hand letters to Dr. Verwoerd, but the Prime Minister is in Cape Town.

"Pilgrims" in White appeal to Verwoerd

INDIAN women and children waited patiently this morning for an hour before they clambered into buses to take them to Pretoria. Most of the women were dressed in white saris.

So many people responded to the call to join an Indian women's "pilgrimage" to the Union Building, Pretoria, that some had to wait at Jeppe and other points until extra buses were arranged.

At Fordsburg, where a large crowd gathered, Special Branch plain-clothes men and uniformed police watched the activity.

Two uniformed policemen who were detailed to stay at Fordsburg carefully wrote down the numbers of all the motor-coaches which arrived to pick up passengers. Then they took over traffic duty to keep the narrow traffic lanes flowing in Avenue Road, Fordsburg, as the coaches for Pretoria drew up.

SYMBOLIC OF SORROW

Some of the women said this morning that they would choose spokesmen from the crowd when they got to Pretoria. Their saris, they said, were symbolic of the sorrow they felt about the future in relation to the Group Areas Act and apartheid.

Almost every one of the women carried a letter—a copy of a circular letter compiled over the week-end — and each had signed her copy personally.

"These letters will be handed to the Prime Minister, if possible," said one of the women today.

EACH A PROTEST

Each letter protests at the Group Areas Act which, it says, is depriving the Indian people of their livelihood and their homes. The letter also complains about the Department of Indian Affairs and the attitude of the Minister towards requests.

As the women and children assembled in Fordsburg Square today a silent figure stood watching for a few moments from the doorway of a house nearby. She was Mrs. Amina Cachalia, who with her husband, Mr. Yusuf Cachalia, both prominent members of the community, were served with banning orders recently.

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Verwoerd meets Indians today

Staff Reporter

INDIAN women from all over the Transvaal will travel to Pretoria at their own request to see the Prime Minister, Dr. Verwoerd, at midday today.

In their letter of request they said that the Group Areas Act and "the policy of apartheid in relation to the Indian people" was causing grave concern and agitation to the Indian community.

"As mothers and women we face a bleak future," the letter said.

"Under the Group Areas Act our people are being deprived of their homes, means of livelihood and property.

"Hundreds of families in Johannesburg, Pretoria and other parts of the province are living under notice and the force of law is being applied to drive us into isolated ghettos."

Bringing misery

The policy of Group Areas was bringing misery, loss of self-respect and human dignity, poverty and squalor.

"We have no confidence in the Minister of Indian Affairs," the letter added. "He is impotent to redress our just and legitimate grievances. Instead of meeting the demands of the Indian people he is looking for 'yes-men' and stooges to implement the policy of apartheid against our unanimous wishes."

When the women arrive in Pretoria they will hold a prayer meeting in the Asiatic Bazaar before walking to the Union Buildings.

Special buses will take the women from Johannesburg to Pretoria where they will meet women from Lenasia, Laudium, Ventersdorp, Evaton, Leslie and Kliptown.

They will wear white saris as a sign of mourning and each will carry a letter addressed to the Prime Minister.

Dogs grab saris at protest

POLICE DOGS IN PRETORIA TODAY grabbed the saris of two Indian women—one of whom fainted. The women had gone to Union Buildings to hand in protests against the Group Areas Act, and soon after this incident they left and returned to their buses. All dressed in white (the Indian colour for mourning) they had come from Klerksdorp, Krugersdorp, Springs, Randfontein, Potchefstroom and Johannesburg.

After reaching the Union Buildings, they demanded to see a Cabinet Minister, but without result. So they threw through the locked gates letters which each of them was carrying.

The letters said that the ruthless application of apartheid was causing grave concern to the Indian people. Its implementation in the form of Group Areas, job reservation and other measures involved the loss of homes, livelihood and property and also resulted in "impoverishment and destitution."

There were several brisk altercations between the leaders of the women and police officers.

One of the Johannesburg buses carrying about 50 white-saried women, was turned back by a senior officer. When the women tried to leave the bus around a corner, they were warned not to alight. The bus then left towards Pretoria with a Security Branch car in its wake.

The demonstration was timed to

coincide with a conference being addressed in the near-by Indian township of Laudium by the Minister of Indian Affairs, Mr Maree.

★ Pictures and Mr. Maree's speech on Page Three.

WANTED TO SEE VERWOERD

The Star Pretoria Bureau

A FEW score Indian women from eight buses from various Transvaal towns penetrated a police cordon around Union Buildings just after noon today, and demanded to see Dr. Verwoerd. They stood before the locked gates at the West wing of the buildings. They managed to slip in hundreds of petitions against the application of the Group Areas Act.

Squads of Security Branch men and dog handlers, guarded all entrances to Union Buildings and most of the women were turned back.

The women, all dressed in white, were protesting against hardships under the Act.

Rand Daily Mail, Johannesburg, 11 December 1963

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

... Indian women dispersed by dogs

Pretoria Reporter
POLICE dogs helped break up a demonstration by several hundred Indian women outside the Union Buildings in Pretoria yesterday. The women, dressed in white saris, had come to protest to the Prime Minister about the Group Areas Act.

They gathered from many parts of the Transvaal at an Indian temple in the Asian bazaar at 11 a.m. After a prayer, buses took them to the Union Buildings.

Earlier in the morning road-blocks on the Johannesburg road and at Laudium checked cars and other vehicles travelling to Pretoria.

SWARMED OUT

In Church Street, below the Union Buildings, several policemen and Special Branch detectives, assisted by a police dog, tried to stop the women leaving the buses, but they swarmed out.

The women entered the grounds and walked up towards the buildings. At the head of a stairway, police again tried to stop them.

They broke past the police and continued up through the gardens to the western entrance, where police had closed an iron gate. Three of them stood guard in front of the gate.

DOGS LUNGED

Protesting "He is our Prime Minister as well as yours," the women scrambled around the gates throwing pamphlets over the top.

They were warned to retreat to the opposite side of the road. There they sat under a line of trees. Soon after, police with more dogs arrived.

The dogs, on long leashes, lunged at the women and forced them to move away. Just before 2 p.m. they walked back through the gardens and boarded the buses. They were driven to the Asiatic Bazaar, where they dispersed.

IMPOVERISHED

The memoranda which were to have been submitted to Dr. Verwoerd read:

"The ruthless application of the policy of apartheid is causing grave concern to our people. Its implementation in the form of group areas, job reservation and other measures involve loss of homes, impoverishment and assault on our dignity and self-respect.



A police constable, with his dog, talks to a crowd of Indian women who entered the Union Building grounds yesterday. Several dogs were used to force the women away.

MAREE WARNS INDIANS TO CO-OPERATE

PRETORIA REPORTER

THE Minister of Indian Affairs, Mr. Maree, yesterday warned a conference of 100 Indians in Pretoria that if the "necessary co-operation" was not forthcoming from the Indian community he would administer their affairs in the way he thought fit.

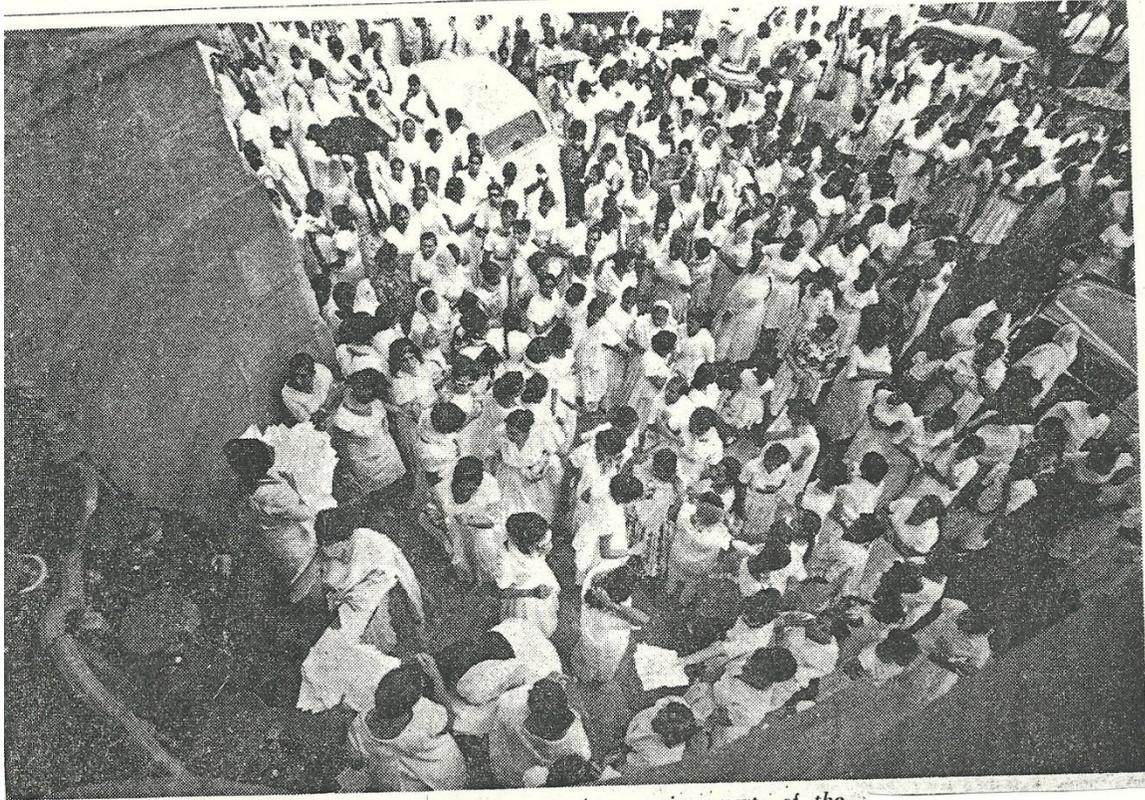
The conference, which will continue today, was called by Mr. Maree to discuss the establishment of a national Indian Council.

this adjustment of outlook among its followers, who for many years said the Indians were a foreign people who should go back to their own country."

Pretoria News, 11 December 1963

WANTED BY

Protest By Women



About 500 Indian women from various parts of the Transvaal yesterday walked through police cordons round the Union Buildings but were stopped at the west wing gate by police when they came to protest about the application of the Group Areas Act.



Post, 15 December 1963



● Women break through the police cordon

The day the women went to Pretoria...

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, will be remembered as the day 300 Indian women tried to see Dr. Verwoerd.

The women — of all faiths and from all parts of the Transvaal — braved police dogs when they went to Pretoria's Union Buildings in a bid to demonstrate before the Prime Minister their disapproval of the application of the Group Areas Act.

The women — most of them draped in white saris and some carrying babies in their arms — were orderly and peaceful as they converged at the Asiatic Bazaar Temple in Pretoria.

The demonstration began with a prayer at the Temple.

"Oh, God, grant us understanding, wisdom, guidance and love," they said in their prayer. "We have gathered here to beseech Thee, God, to give us strength against unjust laws that deny us human dignity and self-respect."

Security Police mingled with the women and took down notes as the prayer was being said.

After the short service, the women were conveyed to the Union Buildings in a fleet of buses.

HOWLING DOGS

In stifling heat at the Union Buildings, women broke through police cordons and eventually reached the buildings with dogs howling at them.

Police reinforcements and more dogs were brought as the women attempted to enter the Government offices to put their case before the Prime Minister, Dr. Verwoerd, himself.

Several women complained that police dogs had been set upon them.

Mrs. Hava Saloojee, a 40-year-old Johannesburg woman, said she was bitten by a dog on the right arm. Miss Tilly Shireen, a deaf and dumb girl from Nigel, had a scratch on the left foot after a dog had leapt at her.

Another dog leapt and pulled Miss Sayboon Motola, of Johannesburg, by her dress. But she escaped unscathed.

A woman who was being pushed in the stomach pleaded: "Please, I am expecting. Don't push me around like that."

Miss Hajara Aswat was arrested as the women were entering the grounds of the Union Buildings. But later, she was released after her name and address had been taken by the police.

The women, generally, remained calm and restrained and often chanted: "We just want to see Dr. Verwoerd."

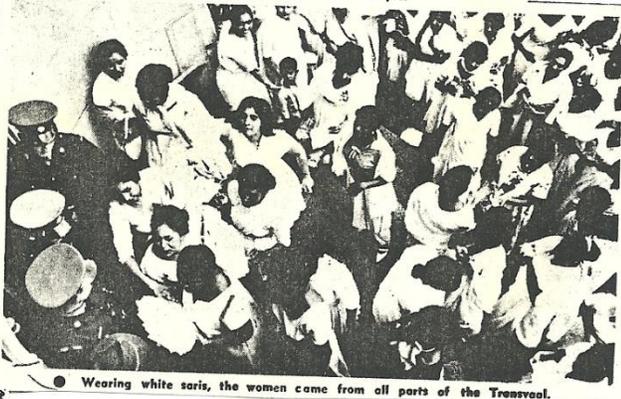
In the letter which formed the basis of their memorandum, the women decried "the ruthless application of the policy of apartheid" as "causing grave concern to our people".

"Its implementation in the form of Group Areas, Job Reservation," declared the memorandum, "involves loss of homes, means of livelihood and property; impoverishment, destitution and misery; and an assault on our dignity and self-respect."

It also decries the isolation of Indian people from the main stream of social and economic life as being "devoid of any justice. It can never be substantiated on a moral basis."



● Women pray at the Asiatic Bazaar Temple.



● Wearing white saris, the women came from all parts of the Transvaal.

THE dramatic pictures on this page were taken on Tuesday when 400 Indian women marched into the grounds of Pretoria's Union Buildings.

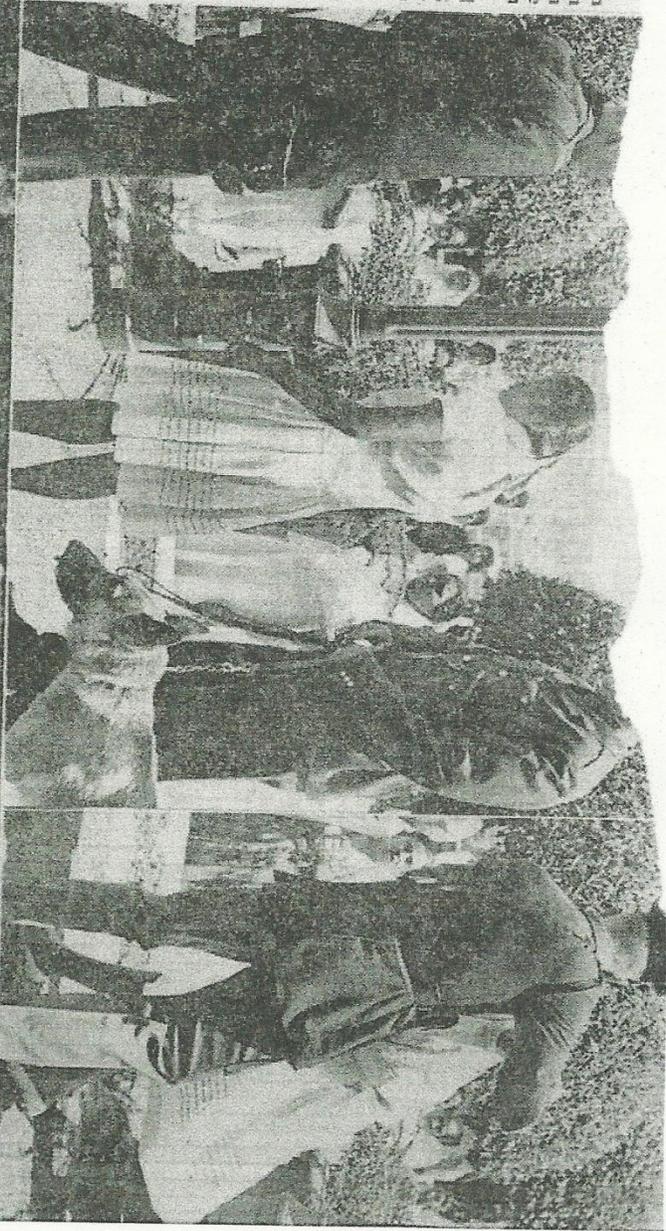
Wearing white saris and dresses — a sign of mourning — the women were demonstrating against the Group Areas Act.

In spite of strong opposition from Security Branch men and dog handlers, the women reached the West wing entrance.

Several saris were torn, one woman fainted, and at least two women were bitten.

One young Indian girl squirmed up to a young policeman after she had knocked his bat off (pictures right).

But the policeman tactfully declined the spar and walked away shaking his head.



Police? date?



The most dangerous moment in the procession came when an angry Indian woman hit a police dog on the nose with her handbag. Snarling, the dog leapt up at the woman's face, but the policeman jerked the dog away.

POLICE DOGS AND THE INDIAN COMMUNITY

ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY, December 10th, 1963, several hundred Indian women from all over the Transvaal travelled to Pretoria to present a letter to the Prime Minister, protesting about the Group Areas Act and its effects upon the South African Indian community. Wearing white saris as a sign of mourning, they gathered at an Indian temple in the Asiatic bazaar for prayers, after which buses carried them to the Union Buildings.

They did not see the Prime Minister. Instead, according to Press reports, after various attempts had been made by the police to prevent them from reaching the Union Buildings, they were dispersed by police dogs.

Their letter to the Prime Minister, a copy of which was carried by each woman, read as follows:

"The ruthless application of the policy of apartheid is causing grave concern to our people. Its implementation in the form of group areas, job reservation and other measures involves loss of homes, impoverishment, and assault on our dignity and self-respect.

"As a woman I request you to take steps that will restore security to a people whose only 'crime' is colour and race.

"Significantly, my representation to you is on December 10th, which is Human Rights Day. A change of policy on your part might even restore confidence and respect for our country throughout the world."

This was not the first occasion upon which police dogs had been used against the Indian community. About a week previously, dogs were used to disperse a crowd of friends and relatives of people arrested at an Indian theatre under the Sunday Observance Act.

The "Rand Daily Mail" commented on these two incidents as follows:

Why bully them?

"THERE are indications that, since the shock of Sharpeville, the police have tried hard to put their relations with Africans on a better footing. Our racial laws make it certain that there will always be a kind of "cold war" between the African and the authorities, but on the whole conditions have improved. The change in the liquor laws has made a big difference, raiding for passes has been reduced and official directives to bear down less severely on the law-abiding African have had some effect.

"But the Indian seems to have gained little benefit from this more reasonable policy. Ten days ago the police swooped on an Indian cinema and arrested the promoters of the performance and the entire audience on charges under the Sunday

Observance Act of 1896. It is inconceivable that the police would have taken such drastic action against an audience of Whites and they certainly would not have used dogs in the affair. After all this the charges have been dropped and the hundred or so Indians who had paid admission-of-guilt fines have had their money returned to them, but apparently without a word of apology or explanation.

"Another unpleasant incident occurred at the Union Buildings last week when Indian women, making an orderly march with the object of delivering a protest to the Prime Minister, were dispersed by police dogs. Is the Minister for Indian Affairs happy about this sort of treatment at a time when he is supposed to be trying to win Indian support for his Advisory Council? Could he not see to it that Indians, too, receive a little more consideration?

"This cavalier attitude on the part of the authorities will be viewed by Indians against the background of persecution to which they are subjected under a Group Areas Act that is driving them from long-established homes and businesses. They form a most law-abiding group which seeks nothing but peaceful co-existence and yet they are treated with disdain as a voiceless minority with few rights and even fewer feelings."

Black Sash protest.

ON the 18th December, a deputation of fourteen members of the Black Sash visited the Union Buildings to lodge a protest against the treatment meted out to the Indian women. In a statement to the Press, Mrs. Jean Sinclair, the National President of the Black Sash, said:

"Indian women came in peace and in orderly fashion on Human Rights Day to make their orderly protest to the Government. They were met by police dogs and roadblocks, and subjected to treatment undeserved by any woman."

After handing the following letter, addressed to the Prime Minister, who was away on holiday, to

a clerk in his office, the fourteen women stood in silence at the entrance to the Union Buildings, the scene of many earlier Black Sash vigils and protests.

Presenting legitimate grievances.

THE BLACK SASH read with dismay the Press reports of the reception given to Indian women who went to Pretoria to deliver a letter of protest to a member of the Cabinet.

"It is traditional for South African citizens to go to the Union Buildings to present their legitimate grievances to the Government. We regard it as a sad commentary on the South African situation that the Government sees a peaceful protest by women as a serious threat to law and order. These women who had started by praying for the success of their mission, were met by road blocks, armed police and trained police dogs.

"We have been given to understand that our police force use these animals for the apprehension of criminals and the breaking up of unruly crowds. Are we to assume that this group of women, elegantly dressed in white saris, (a sign of mourning), presented such a physical threat that they had to be confronted by unsympathetic police and their dogs? Were all these precautions necessary to prevent women from delivering a letter to a member of your Cabinet?

"The Government believes that its policy of Apartheid is the only way to preserve White civilization in this country. Methods such as the police used in Pretoria on Human Rights Day may

BROWN BREAD

by Bob Connolly



(Rand Daily Mail)

REDUCED TO FEAR AND TEARS

I READ with amazement and anger of the action taken by the police in Fordsburg on Sunday when they rounded up Indian men, women and children for attending a cinema show given in the aid of a good cause. The women and children in the audience were reduced to fear and tears by being bundled into pick-up vans and by the presence of police dogs at the police station.

Without entering into the legal question as to whether or not any offence was committed by any of them, was this the way to handle the situation? Would they have dared to do this with a White audience on a Sunday in a Johannesburg cinema?

Is this good race relations?—QUINTIN WHYTE, Director, South African Institute of Race Relations (Inc.).

(Rand Daily Mail)

preserve White supremacy for a time but they will surely sacrifice the ideals of Western Civilization.

"As an organization of women with a deep concern for the welfare of the Republic of South Africa and all its people, we lodge a strenuous protest against such inhuman and unjust treatment meted out to South African citizens."

Preserving White Civilization.

AN official letter from the Black Sash on similar lines, signed by Mrs. Sinclair, was subsequently published by the "Star". The letter concluded:

"To what extent was this group of women . . . belonging to a race which believes implicitly in passive resistance, such a physical threat they had to be controlled by dogs held on long leashes by the police?

"The Government believes that its policy of apartheid is the only way to preserve White civilization in this country. If means such as the police used in Pretoria on December 10th are to be employed to this end, one cannot but ask whether such a civilization is worthy of preservation.

"The late Mr. Jan Hofmeyr said many years ago that he feared that in the effort to preserve White civilization in this country we would sacrifice the ideals of Western civilization. The time is long overdue when White South Africans should ask themselves whether this is not exactly what is happening to us."

(Continued overleaf)