

By means of pickets and one-at-a-time stands the Black Sash has survived seven years of the Riotous Assemblies Act. CORNELIA BULLEN-SMITH devised a new method of reaching the public. Despite having their permit with them, she and Di Andrews were, of course, harassed by the police — which members are used to by now.

About standing with a poster showing photographs of Crossroads

With Di Andrews to back me up, I stood at the entrance of the Grand Bazaars in Claremont.

Lots of people stopped and looked at the photographs, taken by Margaret Nash. Passersby were mainly blacks and coloureds. Most of them examined the photos very closely and the word 'Crossroads' filled the air around us. If white people did stop, it was only briefly and as soon as they recognized the theme of the pictures one could see their expressions change completely and they hurried on. After about half an hour a policeman came by, asked me which organization I belonged to and seemed satisfied with the answer, but later, returning to the Grand Bazaars after a brief stand in Rondebosch I was suddenly surrounded by six policemen who demanded to see my permit, asked me to move on, told me I couldn't stand there, said I was obstructing traffic, poked at the photos and said they were illegal.

I asked them to show me where to stand if I couldn't stand at the entrance and they moved me to the left of the main entrance onto the corner. Naturally this whole police action had attracted more attention than the poster itself and people were just crowding around me. While Di Andrews told people to have a quick look at the photos and then move on so as not to obstruct traffic, I tried to keep my hands from shaking too much. There were still all these policemen crowding around demanding 'What do you want to prove?' One said, 'Agh, she



just wants to show that we are Nazis. This is illegal'. The policeman who asked me my name, address and telephone number was so angry, so upset that he couldn't write.

Another policeman arrived with a walkie talkie and told his colleagues: 'She has a permit. As long as she is not obstructing the traffic, she can stay.' Everything seemed to calm down a bit, when a plain-clothes detective appeared and asked Di and me to follow him into the shop Crowns as he was not prepared to talk in front of the crowd. As we walked into this furniture store, the shopkeeper spat the words, 'a disgrace, a white person', at us. Detective Spanner took the poster and the permit and asked us, 'What do you want to prove? What do you want to show?' Di Andrews said: 'Don't you think these photographs speak for themselves?'

Mr Spanner didn't answer. He just asked us to come with him to the police station. We did that, had to wait there for about half an hour (watched by a still very furious policeman), finally got the poster and the permit back with Colonel Visser saying that he thought it was all right but that we were not to obstruct the traffic. We stood for another half hour in Claremont and then left.

Since then I have stood with the same poster in Claremont Link, Rondebosch Pick-n-Pay, Thibault Square without being harassed by the police. The reaction of the public has been very encouraging. The photos do have impact.

Cornelia Bullen-Smith

