

THE BLACK SASH



DIE SWART SERP

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DIT IS DIE POLITIEK

NOU DAT ons weer voor 'n Provinsiale verkiesing staan, is daar steeds meer politieke vergaderings en toesprake en word die werk van stemme-insameling meer ingespanne. Maar tog neem betreklik min mense aan al hierdie bedrywigheid deel. Veral in die groter sentrums is die meeste kiesers passiewe toeskouers — menige van hulle weet nie eens dat hulle stemgeregtig is nie.

Waarom hierdie gebrek aan belangstelling? Dit ontstaan gedeeltelik uit dwaasheid en gebrek aan verbeeldingskrag. Nog 'n oorsaak is dat die politiek vir baie mense te moeilik word: hulle kan nie tot 'n vaste besluit kom oor die probleme wat die land affekteer nie; die skeuring in die Verenigde Party het hulle in die war gebring; dalk vrees hulle die gevare wat kan ontstaan as mense in 'n politieke twis ingesleep word. En as gevolg hiervan onttrek hul hulle na 'n private wêreld van gholf, kaartspel en liefdadigheidsondernemings.

In hul pogings om dié onttrekking te regverdig, verklaar hulle dikwels dat die politiek 'n vuil besigheid is en dat hulle geen vertroue in politieke partye of politici het nie. Maar dit is klaarblyklik slegs 'n verskoning vir hul versuim om 'n burgerlike plig na te kom; want om jou hande van die politiek af te trek is in werklikheid 'n aankondiging dat jy nie omgee hoe die land regeer word of wat met ander mense — of met jou — gebeur nie.

THIS IS POLITICS

AS the Provincial elections draw near, political meetings and speeches multiply and the work of vote-gathering becomes more intense. Yet comparatively few take part in all this activity. In the larger centres especially, most of the electorate are passive spectators — many of them do not even know that they have a vote.

Why this apathy? In part it is the result of stupidity and lack of imagination. Another reason is that politics is becoming too difficult for many people: they cannot reach a firm conclusion about the political problems confronting the country; the split in the United Party has confused them; possibly they fear the hazards of becoming involved in political dispute. And so they withdraw into private worlds of bridge, golf and charities.

Seeking to justify this withdrawal they often declare that politics is a dirty game and that they have no confidence in political parties or politicians. But this is clearly an excuse for not fulfilling a civic duty; for to wash one's hands of politics is to say, in effect, that one does not care how the country is governed or what happens to other people, or even to oneself.

It is understandable that some dislike participating in the work of political parties; but they should not adopt a condescending attitude towards others who do. In all walks of life people with similar aims find it necessary to band together in order to pursue these aims

Dit is te verstaan dat sommige mense nie daarvan hou om aan die bedrywigheede van politieke partye deel te neem nie; maar hulle behoort nie 'n neerkykende houding in te neem teenoor ander wat wel deelneem nie. Oral in die samelewing vind mense met ooreenstemmende doelstellinge dit nodig om saam te span ten einde dié doelstellinge beter te kan bereik, en dit geld veral met betrekking tot die politiek.

Dit is opmerklik dat diegene wat so bereid is om teen die partypolitiek uit te vaar, gewoonlik geen bydrae tot die politiek buite die politieke partye lewer nie — deur middel van liggame soos byvoorbeeld die Swart Serp. Want die Swart Serp is 'n politieke organisasie, en elke lid daarvan is besig om aan die politiek deel te neem. Die Serp is nie 'n politieke party nie, want hy bestry nie verkiesings nie; en die Serp het dikwels verklaar dat hy nie begaan is oor die party-etiket waaronder die regering saamgestel is nie, mits die regering 'n regverdige regering is, wat op aanneembare beginsels gevestig is.

Die verstandigheid van politieke bedrywigheede sonder 'n party-verbintenis, soos dié wat die Serp voer, is in die verlede deur sommige lede van die Verenigde Party in twyfel getrek. Hulle het die houding ingeneem dat die Verenigde Party die enigste doeltreffende middel is waardeur die huidige regering verslaan kan word, en dat kragte wat in ander rigtings ingespan word 'n verspilling is. Daar is ook aangevoer dat die Serp die Verenigde Party in die verleentheid gebring het. Onlangse politieke gebeurtenisse bied 'n voldoende antwoord op die eerste kritiek; en wat die tweede betref sal die Serp daarmee voortgaan om te doen en te sê wat hy as reg beskou, al vind sommige mense dit ook hoe pynlik.

SUID-AFRIKA is nie die enigste land wat 'n skerp politieke stryd ondervind nie, maar die politiek het hier 'n dieper betekenis as in baie ander dele van die wêreld. Hier raak die onderwerpe van politieke geding die basiese waardes — die status van die individu, die rol van die Staat, die stryd tussen morele beginsels en burgerlike verpligtinge. Mense word verplig om sielroerende vrae aan hulself te stel. *Behoort ek 'n slegte wet te gehoorsaam? Is dit reg om die toekoms van my gesin in die gevaar te stel deur my te vereenselwig met proteste wat rampspoedige persoonlike gevolge kan*

more effectively, and this is especially true in relation to politics.

It is significant, too, that those who so readily denounce party politics usually make no contribution towards politics outside of political parties — through bodies such as the Black Sash, for example. For the Black Sash is a political organisation, and every member of it is taking part in politics. The Sash is not a political party because it does not fight elections; and the Sash has often declared that it is not concerned about the party label under which the government is constituted, so long as the government is a just one, based on acceptable principles.

Some members of the United Party have in the past questioned the wisdom of non-party political activity such as the Sash conducts. Their view has been that the United Party is the only effective instrument for unseating the present government and that energy spent in other directions is dissipated. The Sash has also been accused of embarrassing the United Party. Recent political events provide a sufficient answer to the first criticism, and as for the second, the Sash will not stop doing and saying what it believes to be right, however embarrassing some people may find it.

SOUTH AFRICA is not unique in experiencing intense political conflict, but politics here has a more profound significance than it has in many other parts of the world. Here, the subject matter of political dispute concerns ultimate values — the status of the individual, the role of the state, the conflict between moral principles and civic obligations. People are being forced to ask themselves some soul-searching questions. *Should I obey a bad law? Is it right to jeopardise the future of my family by associating myself with protests that might have disastrous personal consequences? Should I stay in South Africa and try to contribute towards the solution of its problems, or should I emigrate? Should I advocate radical political change and lose the sympathy of my friends, or should I compromise in the hope of making my influence felt?*

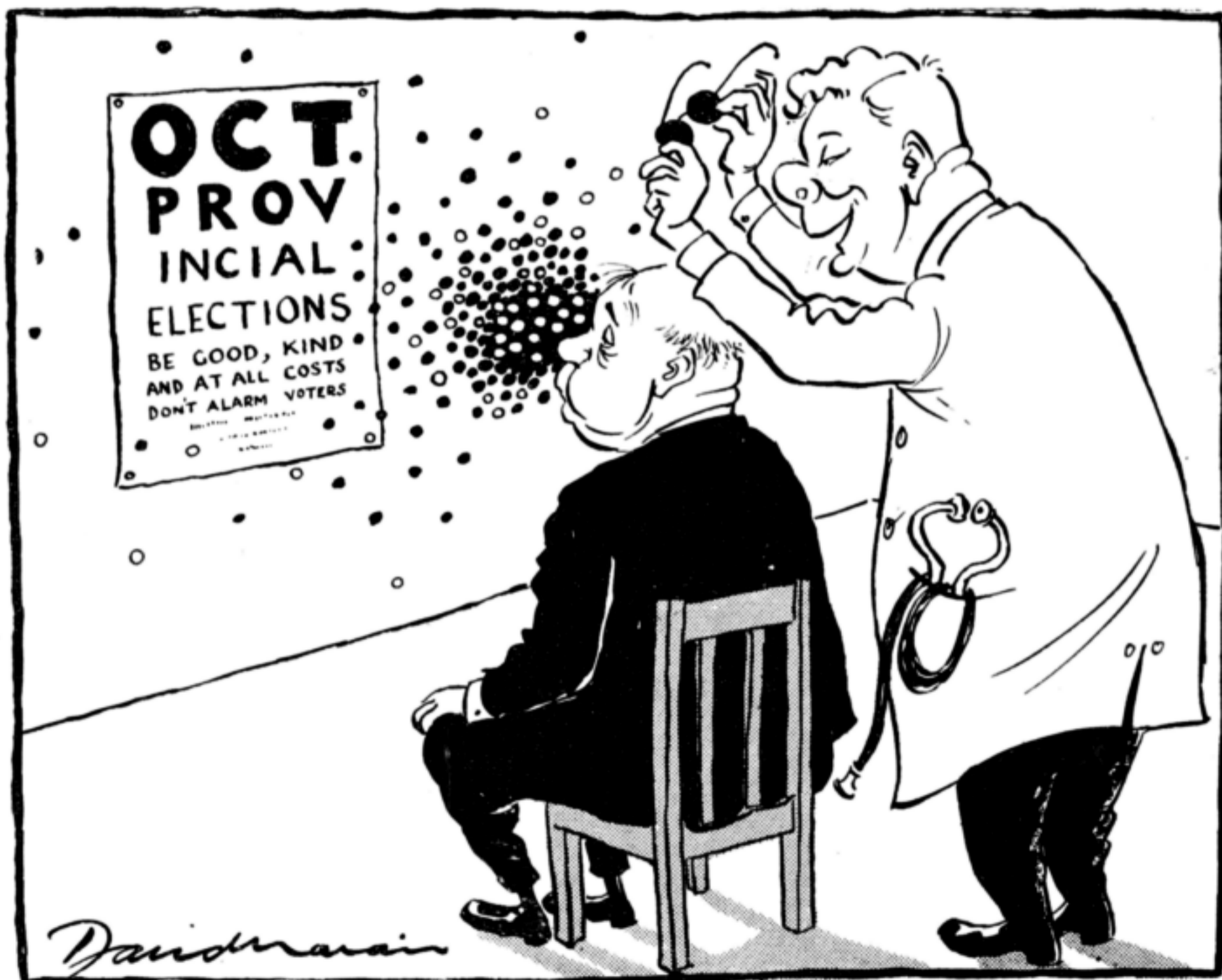
These are profound questions that philosophers have pondered through the ages. Here in South Africa we ponder them again in a situation of practical urgency. That is why

meebring? Behoort ek in Suid-Afrika te bly, en te probeer om 'n bydrae tot die oplossing van sy probleme te lewer, of moet ek die land verlaat? Behoort ek 'n radikale politieke verandering aan te beveel en die meegevoel van my vriende verloor, of moet ek toegewings maak met die hoop dat ek my invloed kan laat geld?

Dit is grondige vraagstukke waaroor filosowe deur die eeue reeds diep nagedink het. Hier in Suid-Afrika oorweeg ons hulle weer in 'n toestand van praktiese dringendheid. Dit is die rede waarom die politiek hier so lewensbelangrik is; dit is die rede waarom so baie intelligente en welwillende mense, wat graag die politiek sou uitlos as hulle dit kon doen, vir hulle in die politieke kryt bevind. Daar is baie sulkes in die Swart Serp. Vir hulle is die

politics here is of such vital consequence; that is why many people of intelligence and goodwill, who would gladly leave politics alone if they could, find themselves drawn into the political arena. Many such are to be found in the Black Sash. To them politics is not a dirty game, a sordid contest for political office, not even a matter of who wins the next election. It is something much more important than that — the question of what sort of ideas will win the allegiance of the coming generation.

politiek nie 'n vuil besigheid nie, nòg 'n smerige stryd om politieke aanstellinge, nòg selfs 'n saak van wie die volgende verkiesing sal wen nie. Dit is iets van veel groter belang — die vraag watter soort gedagtes die aanhanklikheid van die komende geslag sal wen.



"Don't worry about the white spots in the black spots — they're purely imaginary. But if you see any black spots in the white spots in the black spots, tell me at once."

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

● *Powers of the Councils*

● *Issues at stake*

THE functions assigned to Provincial Councils under the South Africa Act and the Financial Relations Consolidation and Amendment Act, 1945, are:

Control of primary and secondary education, excluding, since 1953, Bantu education;

The establishment, maintenance and control of hospitals;

Control of municipal and divisional councils and other local governing bodies of a similar nature;

Roads (other than national roads), outspans, ferries, and bridges (other than bridges between two provinces);

Preservation of flora and fauna;

Destruction of vermin;

Regulation of shop hours and public entertainments;

Control and regulation of horse and other racing;

Administration of libraries and museums;

The establishment and administration of townships and town planning;

Control and licensing of motor and other vehicles.

"Honestly, Sir, I didn't stand for the Provincial Elections. First thing I knew I was nominated as the Standard VI candidate!"



—Courtesy Cape Times.

Of these functions it is only the first three round which major party-political disputes have been waged and that have formed national issues in Provincial Council elections.

Education

The most important and the biggest function of the Provincial Councils—the control of primary and secondary education—has for many years been the main political issue in Provincial Council elections.

The question of medium of instruction is still a major issue, the Nationalist Party championing compulsory mother-tongue instruction and the United Party upholding the parents' right to choose. So also with the type of school provided by the Provinces: the Nationalist Party favours single medium schools; the United Party advocates parallel medium schools, but will make provision for single, parallel or dual medium schools to meet the wishes of parents as far as practicable.

In the present Provincial Council elections, the dispute will wax greater than ever in view of the Prime Minister's announcement of the Government's intention to impose a national education policy on the Provinces. The notorious "Christian National" education policy put forward by the Broederbond-sponsored Nasionale Instituut vir Opvoeding en Onderwys is of too recent a date to leave any room for doubt as to what the form and content of the proposed national education policy will be.

Pericles said: "We regard him who holds himself aloof from public affairs as useless." They called the useless man a "private" citizen, *idiotes*, from which our word "idiot" comes.

—Reader's Digest.

Already there has been considerable criticism by the Opposition in the Cape and Transvaal of the decline in general educational standards and the failure of the present educational system to produce people competent and qualified to meet the needs of their country and the demands of the age in which they live. The criticism has been amplified and strengthened by leading educationists, teachers' organisations and leaders of commerce and industry.

If the present system has failed, how much worse will we fare under a system in which children are

By JACQUELINE BECK

to be divided, not only on a language, but also on a religious basis, and in which the content of education is to be determined by a rigid dogmatism and the needs of an arrogant nationalism.

A matter of considerable importance in the Cape is the question of the transfer of Coloured education from the Province to the Department of Coloured Affairs. The Nationalist Party, both through its Cape Congress and its representation in the Provincial Council, is pledged to carry out this transfer, but thus far the Central Government has not shown any eagerness to take over. This may cause the Nationalists to leave the issue alone for the time being, and the United Party is not likely to raise it of its own volition.

Hospital Services

The institution of free hospital services by United Party-controlled Provincial Councils and their subsequent abolition by Nationalist majorities will certainly be a feature of the elections, though it is unlikely that either side will advocate a return to free hospitalization. The United Party will most probably advocate some system of health insurance, covering hospital as well as medical expenses, and the same may be done by the Nationalist Party, as the Minister of Health has already expressed himself in favour of some such scheme.

Local Authorities

The two main parties hold markedly divergent views on the control of local authorities.

The Nationalist Party has long flirted with the idea of entrusting control of local affairs to Government-appointed burgomasters and other officials, who would unquestionably carry out Government policies and instructions. The United Party, on the other hand, champions democratically elected local authorities and is opposed to interference in or encroachment on their powers and functions by the Central Government.

The question of the control of local authorities raises the larger question of the position of the Provincial Councils *vis à vis* the Central Government.

Successive governments have encroached upon the powers of the Provincial Councils through the transfer of vocational education from Provinces to the Central Government, the transfer of Bantu education, the interference by the Minister of Native Affairs in the siting and construction of Provincial hospitals, and the arrogation of powers under the Group Areas Acts.

The United Party is pledged to uphold the Provincial Council system. The Federal Party is in favour of an extension of Provincial powers and the limitation of Central Government authority to the minimum — an attitude that may well gain considerable support in Natal in particular, in view of that Province's fight against the Government over the appointment of the Deputy Director of Education. The Nationalist Party has long been in favour of the abolition of Provincial Councils, but this item of policy has been put into cold storage of late. Probably the reason is that the Nationalists feel that this question will automatically be dealt with when the republican constitution is drawn up.

Republic

Whatever the provincial issues in this election, they will undoubtedly be completely overshadowed by two great national issues — republicanism and the Bantustan policy.

Though Dr. Verwoerd is trying to play down republicanism until such time as he has succeeded in his Bantustan policy — in order that the republic can be a "white" republic — the ardent republicans are obviously forcing the pace. They are not prepared to wait until Bantu homelands have been set up before they achieve their own republican homeland.

Bantustan

The Verwoerdian Bantustan policy has brought about the novel situation that in this election it will be the United Party, more than the Nationalist Party, which will be playing up the "swart gevaar". The Nationalist Party picture of the dangers of integration and its — to them — inevitable result of "gelykstelling", may well prove less frightening than the United Party's picture of the dangers of a "white" South Africa, surrounded by inimical black states in league with Russia, and containing within its own area a numerical majority of oppressed and inimical non-Whites.

No Dictatorship in Education!

SASHERS
IN
ACTION

THE Southern Transvaal Region swung rapidly into action after the Prime Minister said that the Government would have to see that there was uniformity in education throughout the country.

On Friday, August 14th, more than fifty women took part in a demonstration on the City Hall steps. On the highest step was a board figure of Dr. Verwoerd, draped for the occasion, in a graduate's gown and cap. The latter provided some problems in the wind as it did not sit happily on a two-dimensional head! Beside him was a blackboard on which large letters spelt: "Will you submit to Verwoerd's dictatorship?" To his left was a black banner carrying the words: "No dictatorship in education." At street level a group of women held placards and on either side of them stood a long line of other Sashers. The demonstration lasted an hour.

The next step taken by the Region was to call a meeting on Wednesday, August 26th, in Mrs. Hill's garden. The Press were present and more than 100 women. Some of them were not members on arrival, but at least three of them are now!

Parents' Right

Two well-known educationists, Mrs. Sylvia Nel and Professor G. Le May, were the speakers. Mrs. Nel stressed the importance of education being adapted to the needs of the children concerned, which varied with their home backgrounds. She told of one school in a well-to-do area where, owing to a lack of shops, the children, though otherwise most advanced, had no idea of the meaning of different values of coins, while others in a poor area were behindhand in language but most able shoppers! Such divergence of background was a simple but clear example of the many differences calling for varied lines of approach in teaching.

Parents had a right to choose how they wished their children to be taught. She referred to the early days of Christian National Education, just after the Anglo-Boer War, when it was a movement for educational freedom amongst the Transvaal Boers who would not submit to the Anglicising of their children.

Rather than send their children to the official schools, they went to great trouble and expense to have them taught privately in their own language and according to the teachings of their own church. Mrs. Nel described this as courageous, but pointed out that the descendants of these people were now trying to dictate to others.

Prof. Le May's address is reported below.

PROGRAMME OF DOMINATION

IT was astonishing that a Government who were so vocal about their mission to save white civilization should continuously do things that put the white man, if not his civilization, in such peril, said Prof. G. Le May, Professor of Local Government and Public Administration at the University of the Witwatersrand. He was addressing the Black Sash in Johannesburg on the effects of the introduction of a centralized policy of education if it were based on the ideals of Christian National Education.

Professor Le May said he saw the introduction of Dr. Verwoerd's *volksideaal* in education as the latest move in the definite planned programme of domination.

"In a word, it is the latest move in a process by which those in power hope to enforce upon the whole community the ideas—perhaps it would be better to say the prejudices—of a particular group, which happens to be in power and happens also to be a minority among the whole people.

"This is being done in the name of a fictitious entity called the nation or the volk. The purpose for which it is being done is sometimes described as the salvation of 'White civilization'."

Professor Le May said he believed that the purpose of this domination ran much deeper. It was part of a deliberate process by which the directing oligarchy of the Nationalist Party is seeking a permanent domination of all South Africans.

Views on Indoctrination

Symposium at Pietermaritzburg

PROFESSOR GEOFFREY DURRANT, head of the Department of English at the University of Natal, told an audience of 200 at a Black Sash symposium that English-speaking people had been "frozen out" of helping in non-European education.

The Government plan at Fort Hare University College had been to take students away from English-speaking teachers who had done a great deal to help them and to place them in the hands of those who supported Government policies and ideas.

"Colleges like Fort Hare are now puppet colleges in the hands of politicians," he said.

The three other speakers at the symposium were Miss Christina van Heyningen, of the Department of English at the University of Natal, Mr. J. W. McQuarrie, of the Department of Education at the University, and Mr. V. A. Volker, Nationalist candidate in the provincial elections.

After outlining the development of Christian Nationalist Education, Miss Van Heyningen said: "It is impossible to exaggerate the folly of this policy."

Prof. Durrant said that, if parents chose to send their children to private church schools where religious indoctrination took place, he had no objection.

He did not blame any church for wishing to indoctrinate its members and others in its doctrines.

"But it is totally and entirely indefensible to indoctrinate at the State's expense children who attend State schools," he said.

PROGRAMME OF DOMINATION — Continued

Analysing Dr. Verwoerd's proposed centralized educational policy and its uniformity, Professor Le May said it was logically meaningless but politically sinister.

"To me there is only one educational ideal: to enable a person to understand to the limit of his capacity.

"But we have grown to understand that when a Nationalist politician talks of an ideal he often means a dogma. It often means that he is about to compel somebody else to do something which that person does not want to do."

Professor Le May said he was afraid that Dr. Verwoerd's statement went further and meant that people were to be compelled to tell others what they ought to think.

"But wouldn't it be **GOOD** for little Lavinia to have her brains washed?"



Dealing with the effect of the Government's policy on Native education, Mr. McQuarrie said he believed indoctrination had been exerted on three fronts: in the control of African education, in language and in the content of syllabuses.

Today the headquarters of Bantu education in Pretoria had a staff of 21 in its most senior posts. Of these, three were English-speaking.

Language Policy

Of the six regional directors, only one was English-speaking and of the 49 inspectors, 17 were English-speaking.

Mr. McQuarrie said the language policy was succeeding in propagating an elementary acquaintance with Afrikaans. This was admirable.

It was manifestly lowering the standard of English. This, sentiment apart, was regrettable.

"But it is corroding the foundations of African education and culture, which is disastrous for us all," he said.

Referring to social studies in the contents of syllabuses, Mr. McQuarrie said: "They aim at conditioning the African pupil to the life of servitude which his parents live today. But they are in fact more calculated to breed in him isolation and an introverted and perverted nationalism."

Mr. Volker said Christian National Education had not been accepted by a single teachers' society in South Africa.

He said that if indoctrination could be justified in private schools why not in State schools.

"The whole opposition to what has been expounded as C.N.E. is based purely on racial hatred."

—Extracted from a report in the Natal Daily News by J. Nuttall, 9 Harwins Arcade, Maritzburg.

SWORDS CROSSED AT KOKSTAD

THE PUBLIC likes Brains Trusts. All those that have been arranged by the Black Sash have been highly successful and they have been a most potent means of spreading political enlightenment. The latest ventures in this field took place at Kokstad, Howick and Maritzburg. The Kokstad meeting was reported over five columns in *The Kokstad Advertiser* and clearly aroused great public interest.

Mr. Mark Prestwich, of Natal University, was question-master, Mrs. Gwen Phillips presided, and the panel consisted of Mr. R. Hughes-Mason, Mr. Peter Brown, Mr. V. A. Volker, Mr. H. Bhengu and Mr. C. I. R. Fortein.

In reply to the first question, on the desirability of universal suffrage, Mr. Volker put the well-known view that "the Bantu must be given political rights within their own areas only." He visualised their achieving complete autonomy there. Failing this, he feared that "vast numbers of undeveloped people would control the country," since it was impossible to withhold political rights altogether.

The other four members of the panel favoured extension of the franchise in an integrated society; Mr. Hughes-Mason advocated a qualified franchise, and Mr. Fortein thought the vote should be extended to all over a period of from 20 to 30 years, coupled with a vigorous educational programme. Mr. Bhengu warned that the continued withholding of political

Quotes from the Meeting

You have proved to the public that it is possible to have all shades of opinion and colour on the same platform without causing the sky to descend on our heads.

* * *

We were made very conscious of our ignorance on political matters and are determined to take more interest in future.

* * *

We thought we were going to be bored stiff, but became so interested that the evening was not half long enough.

— *A group of Teenagers.*



"My mind is made up — don't confuse me with the facts."

rights from non-Whites would create increasing frustration.

The second question asked whether it would be better to continue with the existing monarchy or to adopt a republican form of government. Mr. Hughes-Mason and Mr. Fortein were for the monarchy. Mr. Brown had no fixed opinion, but said that the question could be decided only under a complete democracy. Mr. Bhengu — waggishly — said he had no objection to a republic, provided the first president were black. Mr. Volker admitted that a monarchy was ideal when it united people by spontaneous loyalty — but of course that was not the case in South Africa. He wanted a republic.

From the answers to the third question, dealing with the value of a Senate, it was clear that the present Senate was universally unpopular. But all members of the panel thought that a Senate was a good thing in principle, provided it were properly constituted.

No member of the panel was opposed to Provincial control of education, which was the final topic put by the question-master, but Mr. Volker felt that we should have "a unified, over-all policy, and not have completely different policies from province to province." The other members of the panel expressed disquiet about the possibility of centralised domination of the educational system.

... and again at HOWICK

IT might be thought that a Brains Trust would be a tame affair without someone to put the Nationalist point of view, but the Brains Trust at Howick was most successful despite the fact that the Nationalist spokesman who had been invited to attend went to a party congress at Dundee instead.

The panel of four, under the very able question-master, Prof. G. H. Durrant, put up an excellent performance, however. Mr. Hughes-Mason and Mr. Brown were again in action, representing the Federal and Liberal points of view, respectively, alongside Dr. M. I. Motala (Natal Indian Congress) and Mr. A. Gumede (African National Congress). Included in the audience of some 150 people were 29 St. Anne's College girls and 16 Michaelhouse boys — all 18-year-olds. Mrs. S. Johnson, regional chairman, welcomed the audience, some of whom had come from as far afield as Nottingham Road and Pietermaritzburg.

This Brains Trust dealt exclusively with the "pass laws." These were the questions:

- Do you agree with the right to move freely in the country of one's birth, as laid down in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights?
- Have the pass laws helped to prevent crime?
- Are the pass laws necessary to prevent the growth of slums?
- What is the effect of the pass laws on the level of African wages and labour conditions, in the towns and in the country?

AS OTHERS SEE US

WHEN I attended the recent conference in Geneva of Non-Governmental Organisations in Consultative Status with the United Nations, the name of the Black Sash was mentioned in admiration and appreciation more than once. The women who spoke of it were from Pakistan and India. I thought you would be interested to know this.

—Letter from Mr. Quintin Whyte, Director of the South African Institute of Race Relations.

- Do you favour compelling African women to carry passes, and are not the pass laws largely responsible for the high rate of illegitimacy among African women?

These are some of the points made by the panel in answering the above questions:

The system needs a radical overhaul but cannot simply be swept away: it is connected with other problems — housing, employment, wages, etc. Slums are the result of the stupid policy of the government, which is the only body permitted to provide money for African housing.

(Mr. Hughes-Mason)

Pass laws keep wages down. Slums exist because of low wages, and in spite of pass laws. Prime cause of illegitimacy is migratory labour, and prime cause of migratory labour is the pass law system.

(Mr. Brown)

The Industrial Conciliation Act excludes pass-bearing Africans from membership of trade unions. Influx control makes the African worker submissive.

(Mr. Gumede)

The pass laws can never be justified on the grounds that they are there to prevent crime. There are a third of a million pass law convictions a year. Innocent people meet criminals in gaol and are thus introduced to crime.

(Dr. Motala)

Mrs. Sheila Johnson reports that the Brains Trust lasted for more than two hours and that many members of the audience stayed for informal discussion with the members of the panel afterwards. Several asked, hopefully, when the next Brains Trust would be held!

Just in Case . . .

IN case you intend voting Nationalist at the general provincial elections in October and cannot explain why, *Die Burger* has supplied an imposing catalogue of things against which good Nationalists will vote. Here's the list:

All the hatefulnesses that the English Press exudes day by day.

The wild statements of Dr. Joost de Blank.

The un-South African activities of NUSAS overseas.

The social equality at our universities.

The gnawing liberalism of the Institute of Race Relations.

The activities of Albert Luthuli.

The moaning of the Black Sash.

—Stephen la Rochelle,
in *The Sunday Tribune*.

THE WOMEN MILITANT

By G. NEWMAN

THE status of women in past ages is a fascinating study. In ancient Babylon, Hamurabi the Wise gave women equal legal status with men; the annals of Greece and Rome honour the names and record the influence of notable women, both goddesses and mortals; and in England in Chaucer's day (14th century) the refined Lady Prioress, who could take her place amid her peers in Parliament, and the vulgar Wyf of Bath, a cloth manufacturer in her own right (who had had five husbands, 'besyden other company in youth') rode and talked and told tales in easy equality with the male pilgrims.

English literature of the 18th century shows us the exercise of *indirect*, though potent, feminine influence in affairs: on the one hand there is a picture in Pope's "Rape of the Lock" of the artificial and brilliant social life in London, at Hampton Court,

*Where thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take — and sometimes tea!*

And in the country Goldsmith shows us how dominating were the decisions — and even the follies — of the hard-working wife and daughters of that gentle philosopher, the Vicar of Wakefield.

But then came the Industrial Revolution, followed by a disastrous retrogression in the position of women in Britain and in many other countries, which resulted in the tragic exploitation of women and children as cheap labour. The evils and cruelties that ensued would seem to us now unthinkable, were it not that the unimaginative employment of "cheap labour" still persists.

In 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft's "Vindication of the Rights of Women" inspired many thinking people, not only in Britain and America, but in many other lands as well, so that six other countries (including Australia) were ahead of Great Britain in extending the franchise to women.

The amazing scientific and industrial progress of the 19th century carried with it an almost imperceptible advance towards the liberation of women. Significant landmarks were Elizabeth Fry's work among women prisoners, Josephine Butler's campaign against legalised prostitution, and later the successful achievements of Dr. Sophie Jex-Blake in medicine and Florence Nightingale in nursing.

The novels of Dickens, with their sympathetic exposure of social evils, Kingsley's "Alton Locke", and Mrs. Gaskell's "Mary Barton" — these and many other writings, like Mill's "Subjection of Women" — began to touch the hearts and stir the consciences of more fortunate men and women, until the urgent need of legislation regarding women and children came to be generally acknowledged.

Parliament, however, was apathetic towards "women's questions" and it became clear that female suffrage was a necessary preliminary to reforms.

Beginning to Win

In 1860, then, the Women's Enfranchisement League began its work. "No taxation without representation" was the established principle, and yet women of property and education were classed with minors, criminals, and imbeciles in being excluded from the electorate, while their humblest male employees exercised the right to vote.

Progress was slow, although gradually women were winning the right to equality of opportunity in education and in work. For a long time the Univer-

PROFESSOR GEOFFREY DURRANT told the National Council of Women at Maritzburg that because of the cult of sport and an active philistinism among its followers, political and moral immaturity was general among South African men.

"Few English-speaking men will hazard an opinion in public on anything more vital than the probable recovery of South Africa's trade recession, or in private on anything more than the result of next week's rugby match.

"Politically, they are hiding behind the skirts of the women."



**A
FAMOUS
FIGHTER**

★
**Mrs.
Pankhurst**
★

Courtesy:
Cape Times.

sities of Oxford and Cambridge admitted women to the highest examinations without according them the formal degrees, and spirited women had to fight hard to gain the right to serve in public capacities where their points of view were especially useful.

Mrs. Pankhurst, carrying on Poor Law work in Manchester, became so desperate that she determined to resort to militant methods in order to "ginger up" the whole matter. So in 1903 the Women's Social and Political Union was formed and thereafter a devoted band of women of all ranks accepted sufferings and martyrdom in their courageous endeavour to secure the enfranchisement of women.

The militant organ "Votes for Women", as well as the more conservative paper "The Common Cause", urged unceasingly that the female majority of the population should have its due share in governing the nation.

Then came World War I; the W.S.P.U. closed down and the women gave their whole-hearted support to the nation's war effort. But their work was at last crowned with success in 1918 when women over thirty were given the vote, and in 1928 women voted on the same footing as men.

Political equality was followed by the inclusion of women in the Declaration of Human Rights drawn up by the League of Nations.

In South Africa, the inspired voice of Olive Schreiner had been raised in the cause of women, but the granting of the vote was delayed. The National Council of Women, and then the Women's Enfranchisement Association of South Africa, carried on the struggle. Their invaluable work was linked with international organisations, and they

were visited by such experienced speakers as Mrs. Henry Fawcett and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence.

Time and again successive political parties disappointed the earnest advocates of female suffrage. Hertzog was inclined at one time to blame the apathy of women themselves, while Smuts gave the advice: "Educate public opinion." But at last, in April 1930, white women were enfranchised. Miss Emilie Solomon fought to have the opinions of Coloured and African women represented as well. The whole stirring story can be read in the successive numbers of "Flashlight", organ of the Women's Enfranchisement Association of South Africa.

Time passed before married women had equal rights with their husbands in such matters as divorce and children. The Ante-nuptial Contract dealt only with property.

During the Second World War women took their places alongside men in army, navy, air force, and in industry. Few women were involved in the actual fighting, but many ran equal risks in underground movements, and many carried on with their devoted work under bombing and other dangers. Women have great endurance, courage and patriotism; but as Edith Cavell said: "Patriotism is not enough." Women must voice more loudly yet their abhorrence of the human waste of war.

The essential differences between men and women have been shown to be added reasons for the consideration of both points of view. The old fear that *all* women will oppose *all* men has long been seen as absurd.

In South Africa

In South Africa, white women have achieved political equality, and equality of opportunity in education is recognised; but there remains much to be desired in the matter of equal pay for equal work. The cost of living is much the same for both sexes — and women have a longer expectation of life on smaller means. The old argument that men have wives and families to support was countered many years ago by Miss Eleanor Rathbone, who advocated equal pay for equal work along with family allowances to meet the extra strain, whether on man or woman wage-earner.

The Johannesburg *Star* of Monday, March 9th, 1959, contained a most interesting analysis of the legal status of African women, who are caught between the provisions of Native custom and the Common Law. The article predicted that the full equality of women with men, as in Ghana and Nigeria, would assuredly come in time, "and all who know how much the emancipation of women has meant in Western civilization will support the demand."

AT THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT

BY M. MURRAY

SOMEONE in the Sash told me I ought to visit the Magistrate's Court in the little town near which I live, and so I did. It was in a small room, stark and bare, and the benches were hard and backless. But there was air coming in through doors and windows, and outside the sun shone in the courtyard.

Call him Stephen, the accused told to take his stand in the dock. The charge was read: on Saturday night he had ridden his bicycle without a light, he had been drunk while riding his bicycle, and he had resisted arrest. Did he plead guilty or not guilty? No, he had his light; he was not drunk; he had been willing to go with the constable.

Something very funny must have happened, because the constable giving evidence could not quite manage to suppress the flicker of a smile; and as for the prosecutor, whenever a moment of relaxation allowed him, he would half hide his face in his hand and turn to his colleagues painfully convulsed with silent mirth. Perhaps the accused had been grotesquely drunk, perhaps the tussle had been very amusing. But now the accused stared ahead with fixed and resentful expression; his cheek looked sore

Fal lal la!

When in that House M.P's divide,
If they've a brain and cerebellum, too,
They've got to leave that brain outside,
And vote just as their leaders tell 'em to.

But then the prospect of a lot
Of dull M.P's in close proximity,
All thinking for themselves, is what
No man can face with equanimity.

Then let's rejoice with loud Fal la — Fal lal la!
That Nature always does contrive — Fal lal la!

That every boy and every gal
That's born into the world alive
Is either a little Liberal
Or else a little Conservative!
Fal lal la!

—From the Savoy Operas by Sir W. S. Gilbert.

and swollen, and he might well have been feeling the hangover. And the rows of dark faces his side of the room watched him and the magistrate, anxious and tense.

Had the accused questions to ask the witness? Yes, the constable knew he had ridden past him, and why did he say he was drunk? He had used the front brake instead of the back, and that was why he fell. But he wasn't drunk — he had jumped up at once. Patiently the magistrate insisted that he could ask questions — only that, and not argue. At last he understood.

Only a Little!

He had a witness to call, a friend. No, said the friend, he wasn't drunk, or at least only a little. And he had his light on, and he hadn't fought the constable. But then it appeared that the friend had not been there when it all happened!

Had the accused any further questions? Again he protested that he had not been drunk. But now he seemed to have lost interest in questions and everything.

Found guilty on all three charges — fined £1 and £5 and £2, total £8, or so many weeks. The magistrate gathered together his papers, and the court was adjourned. Away slipped the friend, presumably to find the money.

Mine has been a sheltered life, and my knowledge of how the law works is derived from fiction and accounts of famous trials. I once saw *The Trial of Mary Dugan* performed, so exciting a play that at one moment when the heroine's fortunes were at their lowest, a man behind me rose up and shouted across the audience to the prosecutor on the stage, "Stop bullying her, you beast!" And last year I read *The Anatomy of a Murder*, the novel by Robert Travers which has such a fine picture of a judge. I wish I could remember the title of a novel of Gilbert Parker's of long ago in which the lawyer, most brilliant when he is tipsy, brilliantly defends a rough French-Canadian trapper charged with murder, and wins his case. When the grateful client comes up to stammer his thanks, the lawyer mutters thickly, "Get away from me, you're as guilty as hell!" That was a grand beginning for a book. We all enjoy these stories, and we know that a man has the right to have his case, whatever it may be, put as well

as possible. All you do when you are in trouble is to engage a skilful lawyer.

Now two policemen had said that Stephen was drunk: he smelt of liquor and was unsteady on his feet, so he was drunk — but not so drunk as not to know what he was doing. What fair game they would have been for our lawyer of fiction, tripping them up on their simple tests for alcoholism! And how he would have cross-examined them until he had built up a picture of an unfortunate cyclist, pounced on while still suffering from the shock of his accident, and dragged along by the constable and the helpful bystander till he slumped in the charge office from pain and sheer fatigue! How easily one can work it out!

But our little drama had no chance of ending like that, for the unhappy Stephen had neglected to engage his learned counsel for the defence, and so he learnt the hard way that it is dangerous to be drunk on a bicycle.

Where Stephen came from and where he was going struck me as having some importance. Would he find anyone to encourage him to face his dark problems, or would he just go and drink a bottle of cheap wine and see if he felt better?

However, that is not the concern of our legal system: the magistrate had done his job and deserved his cup of tea. And the three policemen, I am quite sure, forgathered somewhere in the buildings, and the big ones slapped the young constable on the back and laughed and laughed uproariously. Yes, it must have been very funny!

Election Comment

“Next year’s [1959] Provincial Council elections will be the republican trial match, and will determine how soon we play the final test match. . . . Our courts are sovereign, we are Union citizens, we have only one flag, and one anthem. The republic is no longer a question of sentiment; it has become a necessity.

—*Mr. J. Vorster, Deputy Minister of Education, speaking in Bethlehem, as quoted in Die Volksblad.*

* * *

Before an election — general or provincial — he told his congregation from the pulpit which candidates were the right ones to vote for, said the Rev. P. S. Z. Coetzee, Moderator of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk Synod in the Free State, as reported in *The Friend*.

* * *

Politicians today are a bunch of puppets who dance when the leaders pull the strings — pale shadows of the politicians of fifty years ago.

—*Dr. F. E. T. Krause.*

Who was the Man with the Camera?

THEY were walking hurriedly down the street on their way to the Clerk of the Court. She had been explaining to the African beside her, who was recovering from a serious illness, that he would have to go back to his homeland; but she hoped he might be allowed to remain long enough in the job at which he was skilled (although he now had no permit to work) in order to earn the train fare.

She was looking down at the pavement, thinking of his coloured wife and his children — that was yet another problem. Meanwhile the family had needed all his savings while he was ill: but he was insured against unemployment.

It seemed, however, that the machinery worked more easily for collecting the premiums than for paying out benefits. The Clerk of the Court said it was the first time he had known of any African wanting to be paid out! As it often took as much as six months for anyone to receive insurance

benefits when unemployed, it was perhaps not surprising that Africans working in factories, who paid their shilling a week, thought it not worth while to apply. They never knew when they would be sent away, or be arrested for some trivial offence. She wondered whether, if they were granted insurance payments and sent to a Bantustan, these would be continued indefinitely until work became available for them there.

She looked up and suddenly realized that she was being photographed by a tall, well-dressed man on the other side of the road. She started towards him, but he hastily pocketed his camera and disappeared down the street.

This happened very recently and the woman is a member of the Black Sash who was trying to give practical help to yet another family being tragically broken up in the cause of apartheid.

Question: *Who was the man with the camera?*

NEWS FROM REGIONS AND BRANCHES

CAPE WESTERN

A BRANCH of the Black Sash is expected to start soon at the University of Cape Town. Students who wish to join the Sash immediately will belong to the Rondebosch branch until their numbers are sufficient to warrant a separate branch.

A Press statement was issued calling for an impartial judicial enquiry into the Natal disturbances.

Our chairman, Mrs. M. Roberts, is now well enough to return to duty and we are very happy to have her with us again.

OBITUARY

Mrs. Rachel Erskine Dick

WITH the death of Mrs. Rachel Erskine Dick on August 19, 1959, the Black Sash lost one of its earliest and staunchest friends. Mrs. Dick was one of the first to join the Sash, and when well over 80 she sat at a table in Kenilworth Main Road collecting signatures for the protest against the implementation of the Group Areas Act. Even after she had been stricken with the illness that ended her life she used to try to help her daughter to send out Sash notices. She leaves four daughters, three of whom are Sash members (one being on the C.E. and a Branch Chair). The fourth has contributed articles to the Sash magazine.

Mrs. Dick, born in Fraserburg, Cape, in 1872 of Scottish and South African parents, was a descendant of the famous Solomon family of Sea Point, and of John Brown of Haddington. She was one of the first women to study at Somerville College, Oxford, which she entered in 1899. She was always interested in social problems and did much to build up the Women's Co-operative Guild in England before she married and returned to South Africa. One of her great friends was Olive Schreiner, whose ideas on women's suffrage, race relations, African franchise, and other problems she shared. Her charities and interests were almost endless, and all were in the cause of humanity and the under-privileged. Few women knew better the answer to the question: "Who is my neighbour?"

SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL

A DEMONSTRATION and meeting against the introduction of a centralized policy of education based on the ideals of C.N.E., is reported elsewhere.

In spite of the fact that the farm labour scheme has been suspended, there are hundreds of labourers still serving their "sentences".

This region is continuing its investigations into the scheme and has made representations to a Committee of Enquiry set up by the Government.

Members are trying hard to rehabilitate released labourers.

Most of the case-work in connection with passes is sheer drudgery, involving daily appearances at police stations and pass offices.

After an address to the Toc H Women's Association on the work of the Sash in connection with the farm labour scheme, Mrs. M. E. Fisher, the speaker, was congratulated by members of the Association from all over the country. They expressed their appreciation of the insight given into the activities of the Sash. Subsequently four subscriptions were received from Toc H members for the magazine!

WAVERLEY BRANCH

A YOUNG People's Quiz Evening — a discussion on politics and civics for eighteen-year-olds and over — is being arranged.

KENSINGTON AND NORTH-WESTERN BRANCHES

RECORD-PLAYING evenings are recommended by these branches as an excellent way of bringing together "working members". Members are reminded that the Sash now has a varied and interesting selection of recordings.

BRYANSTON BRANCH

A STUDY of the pass laws has been undertaken by members who may represent the Region on the Bishops Committee.

MODDERFONTEIN BRANCH

ALL praise to these members who raised £58 in one fell swoop at a jumble sale.

SELL YOUR MAGAZINE!

TWO members of the Southern Transvaal Committee sold 98 copies of our magazine on a Saturday morning in Rosebank in an hour "quite easily and pleasantly."

Volunteers are called for to continue the practice once a month in suitable centres.

Other Regions please note!

CAPE EASTERN

THREE talks in the last few weeks have woken us up considerably. The first was by Mrs. H. Spottiswoode of the Central Executive. The second was by Dr. O. D. Wollheim, and the third by Mr. Omond, an inspector of Bantu schools, who spoke to us on Bantu education.

— Mrs. Diana Davis.

NATAL COASTAL

AMONG the statements published was one calling for an impartial inquiry into the riots in Natal and another emphasising the belief that one of the reasons for the banning of Chief Luthuli was the Government's anxiety lest too much sympathy for and understanding of his viewpoint be awakened among white people. This was published in one Afrikaans and three English newspapers.

A later statement on the Provincial elections urged the public to vote for the best candidate irrespective of party allegiance.

Letters were sent to all United Party M.Ps. asking them to emphasise the obvious contempt of democratic procedure that was shown in the last session of Parliament.

PIETERMARITZBURG BRANCH

THIS branch was one of the sponsoring organisations for the big public meeting at the City Hall to support the stand of the Executive Committee of the Province in their refusal to appoint Mr. J. Stander to the post of Deputy Director of Education, instead of their own nominee, Mr. H. Lundie. The Pietermaritzburg chairman, Mrs. Park Ross, represented the Sash on the platform.

A symposium on Christian National Education is reported in this magazine. A tape recording was made.

A Bail Fund has been started in preparation for the application of passes to women in the area.

NATAL MIDLANDS

MOOI RIVER BRANCH

CORRESPONDENCE between the District Commandant of Police in Ladysmith and this branch was successfully concluded with a letter from the commandant stating (a) that the police would treat Africans in town on their employer's business as if they were on their employer's property; (b) that they would warn Africans to appear in court instead of arresting them (but only if they were in possession of reference books); (c) that he hoped that the Sash would have no further cause for complaint!

IXOPO BRANCH

A TAPE RECORDING was made of the public meeting on passes for African women held by this branch. The meeting was addressed by Mrs. J. O'Callaghan of Pietermaritzburg Branch.

Pressure on Local Authorities: The Chairman investigated a report sent to her that Africans of Umzimkulu were not to be permitted to rebuild their homes which had been destroyed by floods. It was found that the Whites in the area had contributed generously to the establishment of temporary homes, but it had been made quite clear to the Africans that these homes were destined to be owned by Whites. The local authority has asked permission of the Government to set aside an area for an African village. The Ixopo Branch are awaiting developments.

BORDER

THIS region is embarking on a programme of lectures and letters to the Press to tell the public in their area the facts about Christian National Education.

POST BAG

GREETINGS! Please find enclosed sixpence stamps for the June/July issue of your magazine. Further, as one interested in people and organisations fighting for the betterment of laws and living conditions in South Africa I ask for your subscription rates and for any price list of journals, books or periodicals you may have.

The stand taken by your organisation is very much appreciated by us Africans. It has clearly demonstrated one thing, that there are Europeans who sympathise with us not only by words but by deeds. May the Lord help you in your struggle for freedom for all.

L. J. NKWEBA.

Fill in this Form

And send it to one of the addresses in the panel below.

- I wish to join the Black Sash at an annual subscription of 2s. 6d.
- I wish to subscribe to the Black Sash magazine at an annual subscription of 6s.

Tick either square or both.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

THE AIMS OF THE SASH

The Organisation shall be non-party political and undenominational and its objects shall be:—

- (i) To conduct propaganda, enlist support and aid for the observance of:—
- (a) Political morality and the principles of Parliamentary democracy within the Union of South Africa.
- (b) Civil rights and liberties.
- (ii) The political education and enlightenment of citizens of South Africa, and other persons.
- (iii) The doing of all such things and the carrying out of all such activities as may further the objects of the Organisation.

Political comment and headlines in this issue by D. Berman, 47a Estella House, Main Road, Claremont.

Leading Article written to express the views of the Black Sash by W. B. West, 94 Highway, Fish Hoek.

Article on page 4 by Mrs. Hastings Beck, Stoneleigh, Upper Towers Road, Wynberg.

Cartoons by David Marais, 77 Burg Street, Cape Town, and Andrew Murray, Mariedahl, Leith Street, Rondebosch.

REGIONAL CHAIRS AND SECRETARIES

Border.

- C. Mrs. D. Curry, 3 Carisbrooke Road, Stirling, East London.
- S. Mrs. C. James, 39 Roslin Road, East London.

Cape Eastern.

- C. Mrs. A. Pirie, 68 Westview Drive, Port Elizabeth.
- S. Mrs. D. Davis, 196 Main Road, Walmer, Port Elizabeth.

Cape Western.

- C. Mrs. M. Roberts, Ruallen, Moselle Road, St. James.
- S. Mrs. M. Henderson, 1 Kildare Road, Claremont.

Lowveld.

- C. Mrs. B. Tracey, P.O. Box 17, White River, E. Transvaal.
- S. Mrs. L. McHattie, P.O. Box 234, White River, E. Transvaal.

Natal Coastal Region.

- C. Mrs. A. D. Powell, 60 The Crescent, Hillary.
- S. Mrs. D. E. Brummer, 6 Glynwood Grove, Bellair.

Natal Midlands.

- C. Mrs. S. Johnson, Miller Street, Howick.
- S. Mrs. M. Dyer, 8 Christie Road, Pietermaritzburg.

Northern Transvaal.

- C. Mrs. A. Findlay, 296 Mears Street, Pretoria.
- S. Mrs. M. Brink, 1082 Pretorius Street, Hatfield, Pretoria.

Southern Transvaal.

- C. Mrs. J. Sinclair, 203 Santa Margherita, Eighth Street, Killarney, Johannesburg.
- S. Mrs. D. Grant, 55 Pembroke Street, Sydenham, Johannesburg.

Bloemfontein Branch.

- Mrs. H. O'Connor, P.O. Box 245, Bloemfontein.