

Union Day March

IN contrast to the carnival spirit at Bloemfontein on Union Day, May 31st, an estimated 10,000 Cape Town citizens took part in a march through the city to dedicate themselves to the following tasks:

- Ridding our country of the scourge of poverty;
- Guaranteeing to all South Africans those civil liberties that are regarded throughout the civilized world as inalienable human rights; and
- Achieving inter-racial justice on the basis of government by consent, equal protection of the laws and equality of opportunity for all, irrespective of race or birth, class or creed.

On this winter day, so sunny that it might have been blessed for the occasion, the marchers walked in silence to the beat of muffled drums. Thousands of hushed spectators lined the route on either side.

Those who were fortunate enough to find room in the Drill Hall at the end of the procession were addressed by ex-Chief Justice Centlivres, the Rev. Joorste and Mr. Joe Nkatlo. His Grace the Archbishop of Cape Town was in the chair.

The overflow assembled on the Grand Parade. Unhappily the speeches were not relayed, but the huge crowd outside read aloud the dedication in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa.

The organising committee of the Archbishop's Conference, which included several members of the Sash, deserves our gratitude for the opportunity given to us to express our craving for a future in which all races may live together in trust and freedom.

that the attitude of many Europeans in Worcester had hardened considerably towards the African. They find it difficult to understand why they burnt down their churches, school and clinic.

Those people should have seen, as we did, a police van going off from the location with loads of husbands and fathers—the African women said they were pass offenders. They should have heard a mother of eight small children telling how her husband, with many others, had been removed from the Worcester gaol, where he was detained, to some unknown destination. She really believed that she would never see him again. Perhaps then they would have understood how even the African's natural good humour and patience have a breaking point.

A wonderful relationship has developed between our Black Sash members who weigh out the mealie meal and sugar and the African mothers with babies on their backs or holding on to their skirts. No political work we have undertaken could have done more to build bridges between Whites and non-Whites. It isn't only the material aid they have received—it's the fact the White women stood by them in their hour of need.

Wellington

SINCE the state of emergency was declared, Africans at Worcester have repeatedly appealed to the Sash in Cape Town for help. They also appealed to us in Wellington, as there is no branch of the Sash in Worcester. Although there are big difficulties in having to operate from such a distance, we could not refuse.

One of our members started a scheme to feed detainees' families, and the Anglican Minister at Worcester kindly agreed to give out food parcels every week.

Desperate Plight

Apart from the hundred children and fifty dependants of detainees whom we are helping, we found many others in Worcester who desperately needed help because of unemployment. The implications were brought home to us when we saw nine little children in the location, all taking turns to suck part of an orange. One small child was left out and burst into tears.

It was then that we thought of starting a scheme to help those who do not otherwise qualify for assistance. We bought warm material, at reduced prices for quantity, and cut out little dresses of various sizes, and trousers for boys, and left these with the school principal's wife to distribute with needles and cotton, etc., at cost price.

Clothes in Demand

On returning to the location some days later we found that the cut-out clothes had been in great demand, and they were delighted that we had bought three more rolls of material. The principal's wife had kept careful accounts and the money for the first lot of material was waiting for us.

There is such a demand for children's warm clothes in the location that we appealed to most of the churches in Worcester for old socks in any condition. These, with the feet cut off, can be sewn into the armholes of dresses to make long warm sleeves.

This appeal gave us an opportunity to talk to the Ministers about the conditions in the location, of which some of them were unaware. We learnt

SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL REGION

Emergency Relief Funds

OUR major activity recently has been the collection and distribution of money and goods for the relief of those people in need of help as a result of the emergency.

Immediately after the Sharpeville tragedy, a fund was started in Johannesburg to assist the bereaved dependants and the injured, and the Black Sash office was offered as a receiving depot for donations of food, money and clothing. Unfortunately, it was some time before the fund could be properly launched, and we found ourselves with a good deal of money and goods on our hands with no machinery for passing them on to the needy. Also, with the arrests under the emergency regulations, additional donations began to come into the office for the dependants of the detainees. Our constitution does not authorise us to undertake welfare work, and it was therefore decided that a group of individual women should apply for a permit to enable them to collect and handle the donations. A committee of twelve women, members and non-members of the Sash, was duly formed, with Mrs. Nell Green in the chair, and a temporary permit was obtained from the Chief Magistrate of Johannesburg to enable them to operate as the **Sharpeville and Emergency Relief Committee**.

The money and donations in kind contributed for Sharpeville dependants have been passed on to the Mayor of Vereeniging's fund, and donations for the general relief of persons affected by the emergency are being used in Johannesburg.

The Defence and Aid Fund

This fund, which will be a national fund with associations throughout the country, has now been launched, and an office has been opened at 17, Harvard Buildings, Joubert Street. The fund will provide all possible assistance to persons in need of help as a result of the emergency, including legal aid, but the emergency committee in Johannesburg, and similar emergency funds established in other centres, will continue to function purely as welfare organisations, subsidiary to the Defence and Aid Fund, and receiving assistance from it when necessary.

Anti-Referendum Demonstration

Our demonstration against the Referendum Bill was affected by the emergency regulations, which restricted us to a "gathering" of under twelve people, but we arranged two stands of eleven women each,

maintained at that number from 7.30 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. by relays of different women. Posters read: "Say No to the Referendum".

Sophiatown

After six months of frustration, a solution to the problem of homeless people in demolished Sophiatown appeared to have been found (even if only a temporary solution), mainly as a result of persistent pressure from the Sash.

For some time, sporadic police raids, followed by arrests and imprisonment or fines, had added to the miseries of the unfortunate "illegal residents", with little or no effect, as they invariably drifted back to the only homes they knew. Then the authorities decided to make a final swoop and arrest them all.

Our committee arranged to pay another visit to the township, and this time prevailed upon the Mayor and a Member of Parliament to accompany

As Others See Us

Mr. P. C. Pelser, M.P. for Klerksdorp: I still wonder whether we will have peace and quiet in the country if we allow certain organisations to carry on as they have been doing. I am referring to the Black Sash.

An Hon Member: Should they be banned?

Mr. Pelser: I am not suggesting it. I put the question: Will we have peace and quiet if the Black Sash continues, as happened recently in the riots, to encourage the Natives to continue with their actions with the pretence that shiploads of food will be sent to them from overseas? Will we have peace and quiet if the Black Sash carries on in this way?

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them. The visit had the desired effect, and the Mayor was moved to immediate action. The City Council decided to establish a transit camp, make a complete survey of the homeless families, and house them temporarily in the camp, whence they could be "screened" and ultimately either provided with permanent homes in the townships or assisted to return to their homes in other areas.

The temporary shelters were adequate, and food and clothing were to be supplied to the needy.

We have now received the disheartening news that there are still hundreds of homeless people in the township, police raids are still being carried out, and the problem seems as hopeless as ever. We have not yet decided what action can be taken, but the matter obviously cannot be abandoned.