

REPORTS ON A YEAR'S ACTIVITY

THE PAST YEAR, the eighth in the history of the Black Sash, has seen continued activity in all Regions. Full reports of the year's work were given at the National Conference, and as much of the activity has been covered by reports in previous issues of the Magazine, the following accounts give a brief outline of the work of each Region, with some emphasis on certain important matters.

HEADQUARTERS

Special Conference. As the General Law Amendment Act was felt to have important implications, Headquarters obtained a written opinion from Counsel and thereafter called a special Conference of Regional Chairmen in Johannesburg, on July 18th. Counsel and our solicitor attended the meeting to explain the Opinion and answer questions.

At this Conference, it was stressed that **Sabotage and violence** would be strenuously opposed by the Black Sash, and that this organization would not associate with bodies or individuals resorting to such measures.

National Statements and Letters to the Press. During the year, statements and letters to the Press dealt with the **Conscience Clause, Banishment without Trial, Government Defence Policy, Race Classification, the Publications and Entertainments Bill, the General Law Amendment Act, the Education Bill, the Banning of the City Hall Steps, House Arrest, the refusal of visas to overseas speakers to the Race Relations Conference.** Memoranda were prepared and sent to Parliamentary Select Committees on the **Education Bill** and the **Publications and Entertainments Bill** and a Memorandum was sent to the Johannesburg City Council on the **South African Foundation's** request for a Grant-in-Aid.

The S.A.B.C. Petition against slanted broadcasts, in which all regions participated, was duly handed in to the Prime Minister's office, with about 25,000 signatures and drew a very curt reply, as reported in October Magazine.

General Law Amendment Bill. All Regions responded to the Headquarters' appeal to protest against this Bill. The "Flame of Freedom" caught the imagination of the public, and this demonstration was probably one of the most successful we have ever launched. There was more genuine public support than on previous occasions. Many letters of sympathy and encouragement were received from home and abroad. Full support was given by the Press in all areas, and the demonstrations were covered by films and television, shown in England, France, Switzerland, Canada, Australia and the U.S.A.

BORDER REGION

BORDER now has branches in East London, Kei Road and Idutywa with contacts in Queens-town, and complains of feelings of despondency and frustration owing to the apathetic outlook of the public in the area. Border considers even the lack of "incidents" at Black Sash demonstrations an indication of this apathy!

In spite of this lack of interest, however, a nucleus of keen Black Sash supporters meets regularly in town and country areas for political discussion and exchange of current political literature and books. In this way, they are able to keep the spirit of the Black Sash alive.

At the beginning of the year, there was little Black Sash activity in East London, as most members were fully occupied with their political parties in the **Parliamentary by-election**, when our Border Chairman, Mrs. Daphne Curry, stood as a candidate.

At **General Meetings** held during the year talks and discussions were held on **Indian Education**, and the lack of facilities in this country for higher education for the Indian community; **Bantu Education** or "Education for Inferiority" as the speaker called it; and the difficulties experienced generally by Africans.

Border members took part in the stand against the **Education Bill**, standing in pairs with posters in the centre of the town. This culminated in a stand on the City Hall steps at the end of the week by some two dozen people, a number of them outsiders.

The Region has been able to comply with a few requests for assistance in following up the whereabouts and the financial state, etc., of Africans "endorsed out" of the Cape Western area. Border country branches are able to assist in this work. The Region was also instrumental, with the assistance of Port Elizabeth, in obtaining permission for a Border African boy to enrol at the Port Elizabeth Technical School for Africans.



"Be fair — maybe it's only a coincidence that the Government and the S.A.B.C. put out the same propaganda!"

Border was also able to assist one of the **banished Africans**, who had been under the wing of the Human Rights Welfare Committee. They gladly undertook to give practical assistance to this man who was "released" to his "home" in Tsomo, and were particularly pleased to do so, as his release was a direct result of intervention instigated by the Region.

Members of the Black Sash attended a meeting of the **Group Areas Board** in August, and voiced their protest against the proposals. This was reported in October issue of the Magazine, and Border tabled a full report at Conference.

A small sub-Committee was organized to sit in at the Bantu Commissioner's Courts to note prosecutions under the **Pass Laws**, but found that little could be done to alleviate hardship.

School Feeding Scheme. The Mayor's School Feeding Scheme, which was started for the purpose of supplementing the diet of underprivileged school children in East London, has called for assistance in raising funds to provide a quarter pint of skim milk and two nutritive biscuits per day per child at African Primary schools and one European school. The Black Sash is taking part in the canvass, and has evolved a scheme of its own whereby an income for the fund can be guaranteed through the housewives.

Border feels that the first concrete step which has been taken towards the establishment of **Border Industries** in the area will provide scope for Black Sash activities in the near future, the lack of which is the major cause of the frustration and despondency under which the Region is labouring at present.

CAPE EASTERN REGION

THIS Region has branches in **Port Elizabeth, Walmer, Salem, Sunday's River, Fish River and Cradock, Alexandria, Grahamstown, and Jansenville**, with groups at **George and Knysna**.

A quarterly newsletter is sent to all members from the Region, to help them to keep in touch with all Regional and National Black Sash activities and political developments in South Africa. The Region fully supports the Black Sash Magazine, and surplus copies are sold in the street.

Demonstrations. Port Elizabeth, Walmer and Sunday's River branches had an hour's stand every day for two weeks during all readings of the **Sabotage Act** in Parliament. These stands culminated in a large demonstration when the Act was passed. An hour's stand with posters was held to protest against the inhuman implementation of the Act after the first **House Arrest**. In conjunction with several other organizations, the Region held a public **Protest Meeting** against the Sabotage Bill, the speakers being **Mr. Leslie Blackwell** and **Mr. John Cope**.

Lectures and Tape Recordings. Tape recordings on the **Banished People**, the need for a **National Convention** and **Christian National Education** have been extensively used both in City and Country branches, and have been lent to other organizations and private individuals from time to time. In the near future, **Mrs. Noel Robb** of Cape Western Region is to address a public meeting on the **Africans "endorsed out"** from the Western Cape.

The Region holds regular **fund-raising** functions, and **Graaff-Reinet** recently raised a large sum of money and sent it to Regional Headquarters specifically "ear-marked" to help the banished people.

Cape Eastern Region is represented on various other bodies, such as the **Anti-Transfer Committee for Coloured Education**, the **National Convention Movement** and the **Institute of Race Relations**, and keeps in close touch with the work of these organizations.

As reported in the October Magazine, Cape Eastern Region made a thorough investigation into the case of **Victor Mvula**, the African schoolboy who was sentenced to six lashes for non-production of a Reference Book. Full details were sent to Mrs. Helen Suzman, M.P. and to Mr. P. Plewman, M.P., who asked questions in the House. The Region is not letting the matter drop, and is at present awaiting replies to letters of protest written to the Chief of Police in Pretoria. A full report of this matter was given to the Black Sash at the National Conference.

Pass Laws. Individual members of the Region regularly assist people who are in difficulties over their reference books, and try to obtain employment for these people. Although there is no official **Advice Bureau** for such people in Port Elizabeth, owing to lack of funds and personnel, the homes of certain members have become unofficial offices where advice is sought and given where possible.

Multi-Racial Tea Parties, preceded by lectures on various subjects, are held regularly. These parties, which are attended by women of all races, are tremendously successful, and invitations to them are eagerly sought after.

Regional Council Meetings are held regularly, but the Region has great difficulty in getting country branches to attend meetings in Port Elizabeth owing to the long distances to be travelled.

CAPE WESTERN

THIS Region still has a very healthy membership figure, and an impressive number of branches. Town Branches are **Claremont, False Bay, Fish Hoek, Gardens, Pinelands, Bellville/Durbanville/Milnerton, Plumstead, Rondebosch, Rosebank, Simonstown, Wynberg**. The Country Branches are **Beaufort West, Elgin, Kimberley, Somerset West, Stellenbosch, Wellington**.

During the year, the Region has fought with all the means at its command against such measures as the **National Education Advisory Council Act**, the **Group Areas Amendment Act**, the **General Law Amendment Act**, and the "endorsing" of Africans out of the Western Cape under the "**Eiselin Line**" legislation.

General Law Amendment Bill. A lunch-hour stand with posters was held at the beginning of the Second Reading of the Bill. After that, a continuous vigil was held outside the lower gates of the Houses of Parliament, with four women standing with the Flame of Freedom night and day, until Monday, May 26th. There were no serious disturbances, and on the whole the public were sympathetic. On the evening of the 14th June, a silent vigil was held round the "Flame" on the Parade. Tapers were distributed and lit from the Flame, which was finally put out to mark the passage of the Bill.

A Year's Activity (Cont.)

The Sash was instrumental in forming the **Civil Rights Defence Committee**, representative of a wide range of political views, with ex-Chief Justice Centlivres as its Chairman, to fight the Bill. A number of meetings were arranged in various parts of the Peninsula, and a mass meeting, attended by about 2,000 people, was held in the Drill Hall.

Group Areas Amendment Bill. A stand with posters was held in Adderley Street on April 15th, during the Senate debate on the second reading of the Bill. A convoy of 14 cars with posters went through the streets on May 4th, and a meeting of voters was held on the 8th. The **Simonstown Branch** protested to the Mayor of Simonstown against the implementation of Group Areas.

Removal of Africans from the Western Cape. A paper prepared by Mrs. Robb (and published in the October issue of the Magazine) analyzing the sections of the **Native Urban Areas Act** under which Africans are endorsed out of the Western Cape, and drawing attention to the hardships and the break-up of family life caused, was read by invitation to the Institute of citizenship. The paper received much publicity in the Press, and aroused a great deal of interest. Thirteen other bodies have asked Mrs. Robb to address them, and Mrs. Birt has addressed five Churchwomen's meetings. A translation of the paper was read to one Afrikaans-speaking group. The Forum published the address in full, and Race Relations News published the analysis.

The Athlone Advice Office. This office continues to give invaluable help, and remains one of the major activities of Cape Western Region. Accounts of some of the work done were given in the June and October Magazines.

The number of Africans who come for help and advice is increasing steadily, and there is need for many more helpers to augment the work of the permanent supervisor, Mrs. Shirley Parks, the interpreter supplied by the Institute of Race Relations, and the team of Black Sash volunteers.

Work with other Organizations. The Region has been represented on various bodies such as the **Anti-Transfer Action Committee**, (Coloured Education); the **Archbishop's Conference Committee**, which held a Seminar in March on "The Case Against Poverty", as reported in the June Magazine; the **Civil Rights Defence Committee**, which was dissolved after the passage of the General Law Amendment Act.

Demonstrations. In addition to the demonstrations already mentioned, the Region attended a meeting on the Parade on December 10th, 1961, **Human Rights Day**; collected signatures in December and January for the **S.A.B.C. Petition** against slanted news; demonstrated against the **Censorship Bill**, the **Education Bill** and **House Arrest**, in May, June and October respectively. In the demonstration against House Arrest, 40 members stood in Adderley Street in pouring rain, with posters: "**House Arrest without Trial is Unjust**".

Press Statements. During the year, numerous letters and statements have been sent to the papers, drawing attention to various matters and protesting against many injustices.

Rail Warrants for Africans. In November, Mrs. Stott and Mrs. Robb, after drawing the attention of the Minister and the Chief Bantu Commissioner to the fact that no rail warrants were available to Africans who had been "endorsed out" and had no money, had an interview with the Chief Bantu Commissioner on the subject, but their request that warrants should be made generally available was refused. The Department does grant warrants in certain instances, however.

NATAL COASTAL REGION

THE Region now consists of one composite branch, based on the old Pinetown/Westville Branch, but including members from the old Durban and Highway Branches as well.

Demonstrations. In May, an all-day vigil with the "Flame of Freedom" was held, using posters which read: "**Reject the Sabotage Bill, the Bill to end all Liberties**". In June, the Region held a lunch-hour mass demonstration to mourn the passing of the **Sabotage Bill**, when the Flame was formally extinguished. 35 members were present. In October, a lunch-hour stand of 20 members was held to protest against **House Arrest**.

Association with Other Organizations. Several members of the Region have joined the **Indian Women's Cultural Group**, which is non-racial, and have been attending meetings regularly. At a tea-party with this Group, Mrs. Powell and Mrs. Ventress gave short talks and answered questions on the history and activities of the Black Sash.

The Region is also working with the **Durban Women's Association**, and the **Natal Education Vigilance Association**. A representative of the Black Sash went to the inaugural meeting of the **Courtesy Campaign** run by the **United Nations Association**.

Meetings. Monthly meetings have been held throughout the year and have been very well attended. Interesting talks have been given by:

Miss Regalia Bam, an African worker in the Y.M.C.A., who gave a talk on **Bantu Education**;

Mr. Mike Gardiner of NUSAS, who spoke on **Apartheid in Universities and Tribal Colleges**;

Mrs. Levey of Cape Eastern Region, who spoke very movingly about the plight of the **banished people**.

Mr. Lloyd of the Editorial staff of the **Natal Daily News**, who spoke of the **Press Commission**.

Mrs. Fatima Meer of the University of Natal Department of Sociology;

Miss J. Thorpe of the Institute of Race Relations;

Mr. Alan Paton.

Political Review. Mrs. Pam Duncan has now become the Region's Political Officer in place of Mrs. Sybil Adams. The high standard set by Mrs. Adams has been well maintained by Mrs. Duncan, who gives a brilliant monthly summary of current events, and stimulates interest in the political scene.

S.A.B.C. Petition. The Region manned several tables for two weeks in December, and collected 5,000 signatures for the petition against slanted news.

Press. Several letters have been written to the papers, one of which appeared as a news item in a prominent position. The stand against the **Sabotage Bill** was given good publicity, and so was the stand against **house arrest**, in both local papers.

City Council. Two members of Natal Coastal Region, **Mrs. Shearer** and **Mrs. Powell**, were elected to the Durban City Council at the last elections. Members of the Region helped with canvassing, transport, etc.

Other Activities. The Region still provides drivers once a week for **Mrs. Powell**, the **Prisoners' Friend**.

General. It is encouraging to report that membership and attendance at meetings has remained fairly steady during the past year, and great interest has been shown by everyone in the monthly meetings and other activities. Active membership has been increased by several people who were transferred from other Regions, or have returned from overseas.

NATAL MIDLANDS REGION

NATAL MIDLANDS REGION now has Branches in **Pietermaritzburg**, **Mooi River**, and **Matatiele**, and groups in **Howick**, **Kokstad**, **Ixopo** and **Underberg**.

Educational Meetings. At meetings held by **Pietermaritzburg Branch** during the year, there has been a talk on **Education** by **Mrs. S. Burnett**; "**Facts and Figures of African Education**" have been given by **Mrs. Russell**; a tape recorded talk on **Race Relations** by **Mr. Hopkinson** has been heard; and a **Brains Trust on Education** has been held with a multi-racial panel of "brains".

A meeting was held early in May by the **Mooi River Branch**, at which **Mr. Juta** of Natal University explained the Constitutional changes in other African countries, and how these changes are working out.

Regular meetings are held by **Matatiele Branch**, at which recorded talks are played, and various subjects discussed. **Howick** and **Ixopo** held meetings during the year at which the Regional Chairman brought them up to date with **Black Sash** affairs.

Protest Meetings. Together with other organizations, the **Maritzburg Branch** sponsored protest meetings on the **Sabotage Bill** in May and June. **Mrs. Lund**, Chairman of the Branch, spoke at both these meetings. Another co-sponsored protest meeting was held against **House Arrest** on October 18th.

Stands and Demonstrations. Only the **Pietermaritzburg Branch** has organized demonstrations this year, though members from other parts of the region have sometimes been able to join the demonstrations.

Demonstrations were held against the **Group Areas Amendment Bill**, the **National Education Council Bill**, and the **Publications and Entertainments Bill**; a vigil was held round the **Flame of Freedom** for 24-hours (multi-racial); a separate demonstration was held against the **National Council Education Bill**; a stand was held against the immoral legislation of the past session; and a stand was held against **House Arrest**.

LISTENING IS BAD ENOUGH

The S.A.B.C. used to be
A rather nice amenity
Which handed out from year to year
A reasonable bill of fare,
And tired toilers, switching on,
Could nearly always count upon
Something to listen to at night,
Innocuous, if rather trite.

Time marches on — today we find
That Albert's acid little mind
Has now decreed that we who pay
Must do OUR listening HIS way.
He's found the medium, devil-sent,
Which our deluded Government
Can most successfully abuse
To air their quaint, retarded views.

Ruthless, reactionary, rough,
Our Mr. Vorster plays it tough!
The S.A.B.C., duly cowed,
Relays his message long and loud.
With Communistic bogeys fed,
Depressed, we totter off to bed,
Thus buying with our licence fee
Alarm and/or despondency.

(A happier thought to take away —
Imagine if we had to pay
To see their faces every day!)

M. L. ORPEN.

(Re-printed from the *Rand Daily Mail*)

Other Demonstrations. Two members represented the Region at a wreath-laying ceremony to mourn the passing of **Liberty**. Other organizations took part. The **Pietermaritzburg Branch** joined other organizations in a poster stand against **Group Areas**; two members attended a reception for **Mrs. Luthuli**.

S.A.B.C. Petition. Branches and Groups collected signatures for this petition against slanted news and broadcasts

Work with Other Organizations. The Region is represented on the **Anti-Transfer of Coloured Education Action Committee**; the **Human Rights Committee**; the **Natal Convention Continuation Committee**; the **Education Vigilance Committee**; the **Group Areas Resistance Committee**.

This last Committee organized a **Protest March** in December, 1961, with the object of presenting a memorandum to the **City Council**, asking them to refuse to implement group areas in **Pietermaritzburg**. Permission to hold the march was cancelled after it had been given. About 200 people stood round the **City Hall** with posters, in protest.

The **Group Areas Resistance Committee** then drew up a memorandum and presented it to the **City Council**, but the Council remains adamant in its decision to implement **Group Areas**. The **Black Sash** was refused an interview with the **Group Areas Board**, and has now written its questions to the Board. Failing a satisfactory reply, a protest march is contemplated.

A Year's Activity (Cont.)

Other Activities. Inter-racial Tea Parties are held regularly by Pietermaritzburg Branch, and Matatiele and Kokstad Branches have held tea-parties with coloured women in their areas.

African Women's Passes. It came to the notice of Pietermaritzburg Branch that African women have been refused permission to remain in the town to seek work unless they produce reference books. The Branch felt that as passes for African women were not yet compulsory, they should not be demanded, so they took the matter up first with the Municipal authorities and then with the Bantu Affairs Department. A Government official confessed that he did not know that the carrying of passes was not compulsory until February, 1963!

Job Reservation. Pietermaritzburg Branch is investigating a job reservation clause in tender documents issued by the Provincial Council of Natal for the Building Trade.

Mooi River Branch is investigating **Group Areas** in their area.

Kokstad Group has been investigating conditions in Kokstad gaol, and arranged for the local District Surgeon to give their Member of Parliament all available information. In the meantime, it has been announced that Kokstad is to have a new gaol.

TRANSVAAL REGION

SOME time ago, in order to facilitate the working of the Region, Johannesburg Branches formed themselves into four large groups on geographical lines: **Northern, North Eastern, North Western and Waverley.** Because of its isolation, **Bryanston** remained a separate Branch. The Region has country branches in **Lowveld, Rustenburg and Witbank,** and small groups and scattered members in **Pretoria, Springs, Germiston and Vanderbijl Park.** A group in **Bloemfontein** with Mrs. O'Connor in command also comes under the wing of this Region. As in all other Regions, most of the activity at the end of 1961 and in January 1962 centred round the collection of signatures for the **S.A.B.C. Petition.**

Lectures, Forums, etc. The largest public meeting of the year was a multi-racial forum convened by Mrs. Davidoff on "**The Education of Johannesburg's Children**". This was fully reported in June Magazine. During the following month, members of the Black Sash attended an all-day symposium on the **Bantu Education Act** arranged by the **National Council of Women.** (Reported in October Magazine.)

It has been the practice during the year to have speakers at General Meetings. Outstanding among these was Mrs. Peteni, who spoke on **Bantu Education.** In this series we have also had Mrs. Fisher's **Political Reviews** and her talks on **African Affairs,** which are being published in the Magazine. Mr. Scholtz, the Legal Adviser to the City Council, gave a talk on the implications of the new **Municipal Management Committee** set-up, and Mrs. Rankin gave a review of Mrs. Joan Bonduant's book, "**The Conquest of Violence.**"

After the passing of the **General Law Amendment Bill,** a public meeting on this subject was addressed by Professor G. H. le May, and Mr. Charles Bloomberg of the "Sunday Times". The

meeting was preceded by a finger-supper and all those who had taken part in the demonstration against the Bill were invited.

On the 15th May, Mr. Louis Gerber, now the Director of the **South African Foundation** addressed a large group of Black Sash women and their husbands on the work of the Foundation. Some significant questions were put to Mr. Gerber, but few were satisfactorily answered.

On the 11th September, a film of the "**Sabotage Bill Protest and March**" kindly lent by United Press, was shown. Afterwards, extracts from the book written by Mrs. Pearce of Wellington, "**Permit to Live**", were read.

The **Saturday Club** has met every alternate Saturday afternoon since the beginning of the year, and the African women and the Black Sash women who have attended have thoroughly enjoyed the talks on a variety of subjects from the Industrial Revolution to dress-making and thrifty cooking. A small library has been started.

Defence and Aid. Mrs. Davidoff continues to serve on this Committee.

Sharpeville and Emergency Relief Committee. Although this fund was launched at the time of Sharpeville under the control of a Committee independent of the Black Sash, it was initiated by our organization and members of the Management Committee were mainly Black Sash members. When **Red Cross** took over the welfare work of the Sharpeville dependants, the bulk of the money on hand was paid over to them. A small sum was retained to form the nucleus of an **Emergency Relief Fund,** and registration was applied for. The fund has remained dormant in the meantime, but a month or two ago it was able to send a substantial contribution towards **Famine Relief** to the Jane Furse Hospital.

Attendance at Courts. Members of the Region have been attending the Wynberg Peri-Urban Court. The opening of an **advice office,** similar to that of Cape Western, is being considered.

Demonstrations. The major demonstrations of the year were of course, those directed against the "**Sabotage**" Bill, which have been fully dealt with in June and October magazines. Various demonstrations have been held with the poster "**Strive for Freedom of the Individual!**" and after the banning of gatherings on the City Hall steps, a mass demonstration was held on the Harrison Street steps of the City Hall with posters reading "**Restore the People's Forum — the City Hall Steps.**"

On the 14th September, the **S.A.B.C. "Hertzog Tower"** was opened, and the Transvaal Region held a small demonstration with posters, protesting against slanted news.

House Arrest. A large demonstration was mounted to protest against the principle of House Arrest on the 16th October, and several more demonstrations on the same theme have since been held. The Region intends to continue these demonstrations indefinitely, to ensure that the inhumanity of this form of punishment and the **by-passing of the Courts of Law** is not forgotten.



Demonstration in Cape Town:

"The General Law Amendment Bill — Further Infringement of Personal Freedom"

have been living and working in the Cape for many years, and have lost all touch with their place of origin. Many, indeed, were born in the Cape.

The Athlone Advice Office is now being run jointly by the Black Sash and the S.A. Institute of Race Relations, and has widened its scope to provide advice for men and women who have been "endorsed out" or are in any other difficulties with the Influx Control regulations. Voluntary workers check up on their legal position, advise them of their rights, assist them to obtain permits to remain, or help them to obtain financial assistance to return to their places of birth. The Office is of inestimable help to a great many poor unfortunates who are ignorant of their rights, harried by regulations that they do not understand, deprived by unjust and inhuman laws of the basic right to sell their labour in the best market and to live peaceably with their families in the land of their birth.

Magazine

Since January 1956, the organization has published a printed Magazine, "The Black Sash", which has been widely read in our own country and also overseas. Originally registered as a newspaper and published monthly, the magazine is now issued quarterly, and contains articles on a variety of political subjects of general interest or of special interest to the Black Sash, articles on topical and controversial matters and reports on Black Sash activities.

Special issues have been published from time to time: one devoted entirely to articles on educational matters reached a wide public, and an outstanding special issue on the implementation and effects of the Pass Laws provided a valuable aid to our campaign to draw attention to the inhumanities of these laws and the hardships that result from them.

The "Sabotage" Act

After the first wide and enthusiastic publicity given to the Black Sash demonstrations against the Senate Act, interest in the organization here and overseas waned somewhat, but revived from time to time, when anything of particular interest occurred. For instance, the march in protest against South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth, when the Black Sash was the only organization in South Africa to protest openly, received much publicity, especially in overseas newspapers. The slogan used on that occasion was, "THE CRIME — APARTHEID; THE PENALTY — ISOLATION".

In May this year, however, almost exactly seven years after the formation of the Black Sash, the protests against the General Law Amendment Bill — the "Sabotage" Bill — again focussed worldwide attention on the organization and on the Bill itself, declared by the Government to be directed against Communists and saboteurs.

As usual, the Government ignored the protests of thousands of South African citizens, including the Black Sash, and the "Sabotage Act," which drastically restricts the freedom of the individual and by-passes the Courts of Law, placing far-reaching and arbitrary powers in the hands of the Minister of Justice, was passed. The powers conferred by the Act have already been used with drastic effect. Citizens have been banned or sentenced to house arrest and organizations have been outlawed, all without being given any opportunity to prove their innocence or defend themselves in any way. At the same time, a sustained campaign by Cabinet Ministers, the Nationalist Press and the S.A.B.C. to equate liberalism with Communism augurs ill for the Black Sash and similar law-abiding organizations.



**"Sabotage" Bill Protest: Our poster is destroyed
by hooligans.**

The Black Sash has continued to protest against the General Law Amendment Act by means of constant demonstrations directing public attention to the inhumanity of house arrest and the by-passing of the courts. Some of the posters used on these occasions read: "INNOCENT OR GUILTY? THE COURTS, NOT THE CABINET, MUST DECIDE", "DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL IS NOT JUSTICE", and "HOUSE ARREST IS INHUMAN".

Achievement

After nearly eight years, what has the Black Sash achieved?

It is true that we can claim no spectacular success, and much of our hard work over the years seems to have come to nothing. However, we can and do claim material gain in at least two instances: our protests against the iniquitous "induced" farm labour system a few years ago resulted in the abandonment of the scheme; and the remarkable success of the Athlone Advice Office is a feather in the cap of our Cape Western Region.

If the Black Sash has achieved nothing else, this help to the helpless, little though it may be when measured against the appalling defencelessness of the Africans in general, more than justifies its existence.

But something else has been achieved. It is a remarkable fact that many of the women who started out with the Black Sash more than seven years ago are still active and still as enthusiastic and determined as ever. They may be fewer in numbers, but they are stronger in resolve and principle; they have grown in stature, and their thinking has changed with the march of events in Africa.

The Black Sash has trained these women to think objectively and honestly about the problems of their country, to try to cast aside prejudice and intolerance, to protest against injustice and to uphold their principles firmly yet without violence. They have influenced thinking in this country to an extent as yet unknown, and can consider themselves responsible for much of the liberal opinion that is now being openly expressed in our country.

And this will never be lost — no legislation can control the minds of men.

"All the darkness in the world cannot put out the light of one small candle."

