



THE BLACK SASH REPLIES TO MR. DE WET NEL

FOR THE SECOND TIME in recent weeks the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development has used the shelter of Parliament to accuse the Black Sash of unlawful and immoral practices, and suggest that it might be "furthering the aims of Poqo".

The Black Sash has a perfectly clear conscience and therefore has nothing to fear from this "smear" campaign instigated by Mr. de Wet Nel.

As women we abhor violence and work strenuously to break down racial antagonisms. We categorically deny that our actions, at any time and in any way could have furthered the aims of Poqo — quite the reverse. The activities of the Black Sash are lawful. At no time has it been guilty of incitement. It gives assistance through its Advice Office to African, Asian and Coloured people who seek help and guidance in clarifying such limited rights as they possess under the myriad laws which govern their lives. Through this work the Black Sash hopes to prevent these people from coming under the influence of terrorist organizations such as Poqo.

It is with amazement we note that the Hon. the Minister considers an appeal to the courts by an individual (Mrs. Mapheele) as a "challenge" to the Government. In our view the Courts are there to dispense justice, which indeed they do, and to interpret the law, both in Government prosecutions and in efforts by individual citizens to redress infringements of their rights. We do not consider that the good offices of the Minister are a substitute for the establishment of rights in a Court of Law.