

PROTEST MARCH *Continued*

and determined action by some of the men who had marched with us, in forming a protective circle around Mrs. Hill, that enabled her to deliver her speech. The students were hustled off the steps, and angry members of the public seized their posters and tore them up.

Exactly at one o'clock the bells, which had been tolling at intervals, ceased, the Post Office clock struck the hour, and Mrs. Hill commenced to speak. Except for one or two catcalls, probably from the students, who were now rather subdued, her short speech was received most sympathetically and appreciatively by the audience, and it was most unfortunate that once again an unrehearsed "effect" marred the proceedings. One of the men round the microphone (he had incidentally been most helpful in routing the counter-demonstration!) now most misguidedly seized the loud-speaker and added what he no doubt intended to be a few helpful words. Some of his remarks were ill-advised, and offended many of the people standing by.

Deplorable Scuffles

Immediately after Mrs. Hill's speech, the majority of our women dispersed, as they had been requested to do, and only a few of the organisers remained to clear up and attend to the removal of the posters, etc. It was then that most deplorable scuffles took place between Whites and non-Whites, mostly as the result of unprovoked attacks by an unruly White element. As far as we can judge, the Pretoria students were not directly responsible for these attacks, although their action in the first place caused the trouble.

Black Sash women were not directly involved in any of the incidents, but one or two of them tried to protect individual non-Whites against assault by the Whites, and they had to endure a good deal of obscene abuse from the White hooligans. Mr. Erasmus denied it in Parliament, but the police refused to take concerted action to disperse the crowd, and except for the extremely courageous single-handed action of one police constable and two traffic officers, they did nothing to prevent the assaults on the Africans. We understand the crowd was finally dispersed by traffic police.

Newspaper reports and articles have made it quite clear that the Black Sash organisers did all in their power to stage an orderly and peaceful demonstration ("and they had every right to protest," says one report) and the responsibility for the deplorable disturbances is placed firmly where it belongs—on the shoulders of the Pretoria intruders, in the first place, and of the White hooligans in the second.

SASH TO CONTINUE

THE Black Sash issued the following statement on the withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth:

The Black Sash regrets that South Africa's morally indefensible policy of apartheid has led to the Union's withdrawal from the Commonwealth.

In or out of the Commonwealth, the Black Sash will continue to work for the removal of racial discrimination.

In our view, apartheid and domination of any one group by another will lead to isolation and internal unrest.

Whether or not the internal policy of one country in the Commonwealth should be the concern of others, it is quite obvious that the Western world as well as the Afro-Asian bloc is against the policy of apartheid and racial discrimination.

Every White person in this country, regardless of party affiliations, should not be content merely to blame the Government but all should now ask themselves how far they are responsible for the unfair racial discrimination that is practised in our country.

A LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA

From Mrs. Jessie Groom, Mayoress of Brisbane, Australia.

LAST week in Brisbane the march of protest arranged by you appeared on television. It was an inspiration to the women of Brisbane. Our thoughts and good wishes are with you particularly just now as you try to cope with this new development with regard to South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth.

Please rest assured that many of us feel closer to those of you who are waging this strong fight for justice than ever before. We know that eventually you will succeed as movements such as yours have succeeded in the past . . .

At many of the meetings of our women's organisations whose objective is to encourage women to take an intelligent responsibility for their community, your organisation is held up as an inspiration and example of what women *can* do . . .

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National hatred is something peculiar. You will always find it strongest and most violent where there is the lowest degree of culture.—*Goethe*.