

THE BLACK SASH

DIE SWART SERP



Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper

Vol. III No. 10

SEPTEMBER, 1958

Price 6d.

Jobs for All

Werk vir Almal

THE Programme of Action agreed upon by the Black Sash at the beginning of August was admirably short and concise, but it outlined plenty of work. In addition to continuing the task of "attacking unjust laws" and bringing pressure to bear on those responsible for them, the Black Sash has pledged itself to work towards the establishment of a new constitution for South Africa, in which the fundamental rights of all sections of the community will be effectively safeguarded.

This latter objective is an immense undertaking, which will have to be left to the experts in constitutional law. The most that the Black Sash can do is to keep that objective before the public. It is one thing to try to stop a maniac from pulling a house down, but it is a different proposition to design a new one. Such work is beyond the scope of the Black Sash organisation.

Fortunately, however, our Programme of Action includes a third objective, which provides for work that any woman can undertake, in large or small amounts, to suit herself.

Section Three of the Programme states:

"It is recommended that each Regional Council encourages members in its Region to undertake practical work among those deprived of their civil rights and liberties—for instance, case work on behalf of victims of unjust and discriminatory laws—either by supplying a rota of Black Sash members to co-operate actively with other bodies already carrying out such

DIE aksieprogram wat die Swart Serp aan die begin van Augustus aanvaar het, was kort en bondig. Om dit in werking te stel sal egter baie werk kos. Onregverdige wette moet nog steeds aangeval word en druk moet op diegene wat daarvoor verantwoordelik is uitgeoefen word, maar boonop is daar nog die belofte dat die Swart Serp hom vir die totstandkoming van 'n nuwe grondwet sal beywer. In hierdie grondwet moet die regte van alle bevolkingsgroepe beveilig word.

Hierdie laaste doelwit is veeleisend en moet grotendeels aan deskundiges op staatsregtelike gebied oorgelaat word. Al wat die Swart Serp kan doen is om die doelwit gedurig onder die aandag van die publiek te bring. Dit is een saak om te probeer verhoed dat 'n kranksinnige 'n huis afbreek, maar iets heel anders om 'n nuwe huis te ontwerp. Sulke werk is buite die bestek van die Swart Serp se bedrywighede.

Gelukkig sluit ons aksieprogram egter 'n derde doelwit in. Tot die verwesenliking daarvan kan elke vrou na haar vermoë bydra.

Seksie drie van die program lui soos volg:—

„Daar word aanbeveel dat elke afdelingsbestuur sy lede moet aanmoedig om bystand aan diegene te verleen wat burgerlike regte verloor het—byvoorbeeld aan die slagoffers van onregverdige en onderskeidende wetgewing—of deur daadwerklike medewerking met groepe wat reeds hierdie werk verrig of, in gevalle waar dit wenslik geag word, deur die skepping van die nodige dienste.”

work, or, where necessary and desirable, itself initiating and organising the services in question."

This, too, is an enormous task, but it has the great advantage that it can be done piecemeal and as opportunity offers. There is a great deal, too, that can be done by people without specialised knowledge of the law.

Quite apart from the intended legal effect of unjust laws there is a great amount of misery caused by the thoughtless and overbearing actions of officials, who either genuinely and innocently misinterpret the laws they have to administer, or, far too often, deliberately enforce them too harshly and rigorously. Recent years have seen a mass of new rules and regulations affecting non-Europeans and the result has been the growth of a fantastic jungle of restrictions much of which even the officials themselves cannot understand. Too often the principle adopted is that the non-European must always be in the wrong. Overworked and underpaid officials can hardly be blamed if they take the line of least resistance. But the number of cases where a non-European succeeds when the matter reaches court suggests that there is a vast amount of injustice and hardship that can be prevented merely by the fact that a European is known to be taking an interest in the case.

In the whole picture of South Africa to-day it may not seem important that one washgirl is thrown out of her home by a careless official or that one family is broken up by the misinterpretation of some small clause in a by-law. But the moral effect of one such injustice prevented or rectified is incalculable. In terms of racial goodwill work of this kind is invaluable and has repercussions for good far beyond the individual case.

Moreover, as so often happens, the benefits are two-way. Investigation of individual cases will give members of the Black Sash an insight into the practical effects of unjust laws which they can obtain in no other way. Protesting against a law in principle is valuable and necessary, but a knowledge of how it works in practice is even more important. It is only in this way that the effects of legislation on people as human beings can be understood. This is a form of down-to-earth education in politics

ZEAL WITHOUT PRUDENCE IS
FRENZY.

—Proverb.

Dit is ook 'n enorme taak, maar dit bied die groot voordeel dat dit stuksgewyse verrig kan word. Dit sluit ook veel in wat geen kennis van regte vereis nie.

Heeltemal afgesien van die voorbedagte uitwerking van onregverdige wette word veel ellende deur die onbedagsame en aanmatigende optrede van amptenare in die hand gewerk. Soms misverstaan hul die wette wat hul moet uitvoer; te dikwels pas hul die wette doelbewus op 'n onmenslike wyse toe. In die afgelope paar jaar is 'n menigte reëls en regulasies i.v.m. nie-blankes in die lewe geroep. Selfs die betrokke amptenare verstaan party van die beperkings nie mooi nie. Die beginsel dat die nie-blanke noodwendig verkeerd moet wees word dikwels aanvaar. Mens kan kwalik meer verwag van amptenare wat te min betaal word en van wie te veel vereis word. Wanneer sake wel die howe bereik word die nie-blankes dikwels onskuldig bevind. Dit dui aan dat onreg in baie gevalle vermy kan word bloot deur die wete dat 'n blanke in die saak belangstel.

Die feit dat een wasmeid deur 'n agtelosige amptenaar uit haar huis gesmyt word of dat een gesin weens 'n waninterpretasie van een klousule in 'n verordening verbrokkel word, mag onbelangrik skyn te wees. Wanneer 'n enkele onreg van hierdie aard egter verhoed word het dit 'n geweldige uitwerking. Wat rasseversoening aanbetref is sulke werk van onskatbare waarde.

Soos dit so dikwels gebeur is die voordele wedersyds. Deur ondersoek in te stel na individuele gevalle kry lede van die Swart Serp 'n insig in die uitwerking van onregverdige wette wat hul op geen ander wyse kan verkry nie. Dis waardevol en noodsaaklik om teen die beginsel van 'n wet protes aan te teken. Om kennis van die gevolge van so 'n wet op te doen is nog meer belangrik. Slegs langs hierdie weg kan die uitwerking van wetgewing op menslike wesens begryp word. Die waarde daarvan oortref enige teoretiese behandeling van abstrakte beginsels.

which means much more than theorising about abstract principles.

Finally, this kind of work may well appeal to those who feel that public protests are only a remote and long-term way of tackling the evils that this Government is bringing on the country. Practical work of the kind outlined in our Programme of Action can give immediate results and will suit those who want to "get something done." It is a certain cure for frustration.

FACT AND FICTION

FICTION:

"The Bill to increase Native taxation embodies the principle of self-support, which is the basis of self-preservation as well." (Mr. M. C. van Niekerk, M.P. for Lichtenburg, Hansard 3, page 723.)

FACT:

We regret that the honourable member for Lichtenburg did not brush up his political science before making such a pathetically ignorant statement. Even he should know that the accepted basis for taxation is (a) full representation for the taxpayer on the governing body which imposes the taxes (i.e. Parliament), (b) ability of the taxpayer to pay, and (c) that taxation for social services must come from general revenue.

It is a fact that Africans have no direct representation in either the House of Assembly or the Senate. On this basis they should not be taxed at all. Africans form the poorest section of the community and few have the ability to pay. The average rural African family is stated in the Tomlinson Report to earn £40—£42 per annum, while the average urban African family exists on just under £16 per month. The accepted figure for a family of five for barest essentials for health is £25 per month. Countless Africans are therefore already far below this minimum standard, yet are now expected to pay increased taxes, so that there will be even less money for food.

It is accepted in civilised countries that the poor do not pay for their own social services, but that these are provided from the general revenue of the State. White people in South Africa have free education, but the Africans, the poorest section, already paying poll tax from 18 to 65 years (Whites pay from 21 to 60 years), hut tax, tribal levies and taxes for school buildings, are now to be forced to pay more taxes to provide for their own social services.

It is indeed fortunate for the honourable member for Lichtenburg that the poor in South Africa happen to be black. It would be interesting to know whether, if the poor were white and his constituents, he would dare to defend a bill increasing their taxation. We doubt if, with his high-sounding talk about "the principle of self-support," he would long continue to represent his constituency in Parliament.

M.E.F.

Openbare protesbetogings teen die regering se onmenslikheid is 'n langtermynbeleid. Die behandeling van individuele gevalle is in baie opsigte meer lowend. Praktiese werk soos dit in ons aksieprogram uiteengesit word kan sigbare resultate lewer en sal diegene wat „iets wil verrig" geval. Dis 'n soewereine middel teen die frustrerende gevoel van magtelosheid.

FEIT EN FANTASIE

FANTASIE:

„Die wetsontwerp om die belasting van naturelle te verhoog beliggaam die beginsel van selfonderhoud, wat tegelykertyd ook die grondslag van selfbehoud is." (Mnr. M. C. van Niekerk, L.V. vir Lichtenburg. Hansard 3, bl. 723.)

FEIT:

Dit spyt ons dat die agbare lid vir Lichtenburg nagelaat het om sy kennis van staatsleer op te knap voordat hy so'n onkundige verklaring kwytgeraak het. Selfs hy behoort te weet dat al aanneemlike basis vir belasting die volgende punte insluit: (a) volle verteenwoordigheid van die belastingbetaler in die liggaam wat die belastinge oplê (d.w.s. die volksraad), (b) die vermoë om belasting te betaal, en (c) dat belasting vir maatskaplike dienste deur algemene inkomste gedek moet word.

Naturelle het geen direkte verteenwoordiging in die volksraad of die senaat nie. Gevolglik behoort hulle geen belastinge hoegenaamd te betaal nie. Hul is die armste groep in die gemeenskap en weinig het die vermoë om te betaal. Volgens die Tomlinson-verslag verdien die gemiddelde plattelandse naturellegesin £40—£42 p.j. Die oreenkomstige syfer in die stede is net onderkant £16 p.m. Dit word algemeen aanvaar dat £25 p.m. die minimum is waarmee 'n gesin van vyf kan klaarkom sonder dat hul gesondheid skade ly. Tallose naturellegesinne verdien nie hierdie bedrag nie. Tog word hul nou verwag om verhoogde belastinge te betaal, wat die geld vir voedsel nog minder sal maak.

Beskaafde lande aanvaar die begrip dat armes nie vir hul eie maatskaplike dienste moet betaal nie, maar dat die koste daarvan deur die algemene staatsinkomste gedek moet word. Blankes in Suid-Afrika geniet kostelose onderwys, maar die naturelle betaal reeds hoofbelasting van 18 tot 65 jaar (vir blankes is dit 21 tot 60 jaar), hutbelasting, stamtrefings en belastinge vir skoolgeboue. Nou word hul nog boonop gedwing om groter belasting vir hul maatskaplike dienste te betaal.

Die agbare lid vir Lichtenburg kan hom gelukkig ag dat die armes in Suid-Afrika toevallig swart is. Mens sal graag wil weet of hy dit sou waag om 'n wetsontwerp te ondersteun wat vermeerdering van die belasting van minderbevoorregtes beoog indien hierdie minderbevoorregtes blank was en in sy eie kiesafdeling gewoon het. Met sy hoogdrawende uitlatings oor „die beginsels van selfonderhoud" sou hy nie lank sy setel behou nie.

M.E.F.

I WANTED TO KNOW MORE

ZEERUST, Marico.—Some further information has been sent to me since I asked for it in a previous issue of this magazine.

Mrs. Hooper, wife of the Anglican clergyman who was banned from the Zeerust Reserves, writes:

"We broke no law nor by-law. What we actually did, beyond the usual missionary activities, was to put people in touch with legal advice, try to advise those in difficulties, render first-aid and supply bread to the injured, and latterly, help some of the refugees to leave. It was a time of violence and strain and hardship for us all, but we are now out-of-date by three months. We do know that many cases are proceeding and that the defence is very hard pressed for funds, time and ability to interview clients." (There is no place in Zeerust where white lawyers can properly meet with their clients—the Rectory was used for this purpose when the Rev. Hooper was still in Zeerust).

"The African assistant-priest, now in charge of the Reserve work, was not given a permit to go in and consequently about a thousand communicants did not get their Easter communion. Just before we left we had to recall a full-time catechist to Zeerust from a village in the Reserve because his life was threatened by the bodyguard of a pro-Government Chief.

"There are two points your readers ought to know. The first is the terrible destruction of law, order and morality brought about by the Native Affairs Department, the Mobile Column, and such Chiefs and their conscripted bodyguards and informers as could be coaxed or threatened into conformity.

"The second is the **appalling effect of the violent enforcing of the passes for women on family life.** Let me tell you the story of one woman out of hundreds I knew of. Let us call her Emma.

"Emma lived in a Reserve village. She had four children, the eldest eleven years and the youngest unborn. Her husband had just died but she had a male relative working elsewhere. Before the Reference Books came, she had never heard of the A.N.C. or any other political movement. She hadn't been to town and was not sophisticated. She worked her bit of land and looked after the children. Before Chief Abram Moiloa was deposed, her local petty chief had agreed with the women of his village that they would not take the Reference Books until such time as the date was gazetted when not to have one would be illegal. After Chief Abram was deposed, Emma's local chief suddenly realised he was now a Native Affairs Department official, liable to get the sack. So he told his women to take the Books. Most of them, unwillingly, did so—Emma among them. They were afraid of the Books, mainly because they recognised that 'pass offences' could separate them from their children and from the land that feeds the children, so, when one day some sons of the village came home to plough and explained further the insecurity bred of having to carry a pass, the women were quite willing to burn them. Emma was among them. She was arrested and brought to

Zeerust, leaving the children behind and in ignorance. The gaol in Zeerust being more than overflowing, she and some others were sent to a Reef prison. From there she was bailed out to await trial and returned to her village and her children. . . . But the Chief was angry, and so were the occupying police. 'I have put these women in gaol,' said the Chief, backed up by the police, 'and here they are back. As if they were precious china vessels!' Emma was badly beaten and cut, and her relation was fined two cattle for 'flouting authority.' The Chief added that he wouldn't rest till 'these disobedient women ran naked from their homes like sheep.' They ran. Some went to the Reef to wait for their cases to come up. Emma knew nobody there, and came to me in great distress of mind and body. I took her into my employ. She had a miscarriage—the doctor said it wasn't possible to say positively that it had been caused by the assault, but he hadn't much doubt. Emma recovered very slowly. I was able to go to her village (this was before we were banned, of course) and arrange for her children to be taken in by neighbours. It seemed safest to get her another Reference Book, which I did. I want to stress here that Emma was **legally** out on bail and **legally** in my employ waiting for her case. Nevertheless seldom a day passed without the C.I.D. or the Chief's spies calling in to look for her. Her nerve broke. She used to hide in the far corner of the pantry when any strangers came to the Rectory, and lock herself up when I was away in the District. The last things I did before leaving Zeerust were to make another provision for her children and arrange for Emma to await her trial in a less conspicuous place than my home had become.

"And there the story breaks—neither priest nor catechist can go to that village and the children must be left to anyone who, in a village threatened with starvation, will accept them.

"Emma was safe when I left her, but I can't say what has become of her, nor what further punishments await her for allowing a 3s. 6d. pass to be burned.

"It is a typical story, horribly familiar to me. I have told it badly because I find it shocking in the extreme.

"You asked what was happening—the violation of law, the destruction of order, the rape of family life. I don't know what is happening now, but it seems pretty obvious that the fear and distrust of all the Emmas and their children were more than justified."

I certainly think so, too. Would official silence persist if all were well? Keep your eyes open for news of Sekhukhuniland too, now. Why is it that so often when the Government tries to impose the Bantu Authorities Act on Reserves trouble occurs? **Why are we not told what is happening?** For whose good are these measures intended?

I want to know more.

P.B.

EMMELINE PANKHURST

CENTENARY 1858—1958

On 4th July the Emmeline Pankhurst Centenary was celebrated in London, and the Black Sash was indeed honoured to be invited to take part in the proceedings. We were very lucky to be represented by three of our most steadfast and capable members, Mrs. Jessie Power, Miss Marjorie Juta and Mrs. Anna Marais. Mrs. Marais, who laid a wreath of S.A. flowers on behalf of the Black Sash, sent us this report:

WHEN the vote came to women in South Africa it came as a gift, not as a reward after a struggle. But now that I, as one of these South African women, have had the privilege to be present at the Pankhurst Centenary, I feel as if I have in some small measure experienced the thrill of the wonderful battle these women of Britain fought.

The proceedings started with an At Home in the Members' dining-room of the House of Commons. I went with Mrs. Jessie Power and met Miss Marjorie Juta there. We were received by four women M.P.'s (Viscountess Davidson, Mrs. Jean Mann, Dr. Edith Summerskill and Dame Irene Ward), and had a splendid red-coated official to a-call-a-our-names-a. As one of the members said, "How nice for women to be shown in instead of being shown out." A most illustrious gathering of women both old and young! But those that struck me most were the contemporaries of E. Pankhurst. They fell into two distinct types—the dear little Dresden China women wearing soft pinks and blues and the positive dreadnoughts wearing whatever they wanted to, and if they wanted to—all of them showing the ravages of the years in their bodies, their hands, their faces, but all of them with eyes that are incredibly young and still reflecting the light of battle—most refreshing faces. The M.P.s spoke of the disabilities women suffered in the past, of the Pankhurst fight, of the steady progress being made towards equality (the latest achievement being women peers) and of the need for greater progress. "Why," said M.P. Mrs. Jean Mann, "when there are 30 women members in the House and we seek to take part in a debate should we be told that **one** woman had already been allowed to speak?"

As the first woman member in the House, Nancy Lady Ascot brought forth gales of laughter with her description of entering the House for the first time: "I had on one side Lloyd George, on the other Balfour, and they were both trembling because they were both thoroughly ashamed of what they were doing."

From the House we went to Mrs. Pankhurst's statue, standing in a corner which is overshadowed by the magnificent Victoria Tower and is sheltered from the road by large plane trees—a womanly figure standing there in dignity and beauty but showing clearly the ravages of illness (after all she was

50 when she first went to prison). There we gathered, the old campaigners with the green, white and purple suffragette scarves and badges and a flag, a sprinkling of men (some had been fellow jailbirds), younger women, relations, women from the far-off Commonwealth countries—all to pay informal tribute with floral tokens to her memory. Our South African flowers had not come in time, but I found some small Jakob Regops (soos die kleintjies wat ons in die veld sien groei) and blue agapanthus which were woven into a charming sheaf: "To the memory of E. Pankhurst, The Black Sash—South Africa—Die Swart Serp—Suid-Afrika" was pinned on to the black ribbon.

The evening meeting, with Mrs. Pankhurst's niece, Miss Enid Goulden Back, in the chair, gave women from Commonwealth countries who had not fought the good fight a chance to express their views on the impact of Mrs. Pankhurst's work on themselves and their countries. From South Africa Mrs. Davie (widow of Dr. Davie) spoke on behalf of the N.C.W.



Mrs. Anna Marais (extreme left) laying the Black Sash sheaf at the foot of the statue to Emmeline Pankhurst.

in Cape Town, and I spoke as an individual and also as a member of the Black Sash. The point they liked best was when I said that the Black Sash, by realising the responsibilities attached to the privilege of voting, were really building on the foundations laid by Mrs. Pankhurst when we strove to encourage our citizens to shoulder those responsibilities. Lord Pethick-Lawrence spoke stirringly of his sufferings with the women (he was force fed). Her Excellency Begum Ikramullah from Pakistan and Mrs. Casinader from Ceylon both paid tribute most charmingly. But what I liked best of all were the short incidents the old fighters recalled in a few sentences. All illustrated the tremendous influence Mrs. Pankhurst had on them. Little blue-eyed Miss Mayo,

who said speeches were not in her line, Alderman Dorothy Bowker, with her male haircut and suit, waving a lorgnette which had been given her by Mrs. Pankhurst, Miss Eileen Casey (bent almost double) who told of the football games which she played in prison without her long skirts and for which reason Mrs. Pankhurst called her "boy," and so many more memories as living now as at the time, perhaps more so now, because their shining eyes tell of their pride in the good fight well fought.

I could only come to the conclusion that blessed are those who have had and have seized such an opportunity in their lives.

ANNA MARAIS.

VRYHEID — EN SY EISE

DIE vryheid bring vir die mens op elke lewensterrein verantwoordelikheid mee. Sonder verantwoordelikheid word alle vryheid gewone losbandigheid. Dit geld kinders en ouer mense, individue sowel as mensegroepe of hele volke. As die vryheid nie deur verantwoordelikheid gedra en getemper word nie, ruk dit hand uit en word wildheid.

Nie een van ons wil die vryheid verloor nie. Laat ons dan met verantwoordelikheid teenoor ons medemens en God optree.

Ek wil vanmôre die lyn op één lewensterrein so effens deurtrek: die vryheid van diskussie of meningsuiting.

Hierdie vryheid is vir die meeste van ons in Suid-Afrika so vanselfsprekend dat ons die geleentheid om 'n saak te bespreek, beskou as normale deel van die wêreld se sosiale struktuur. In werklikheid is hierdie vryheid egter die navrug van 'n geweldige geestelike verowering. In groot gebiede van die wêreld en deur lang tydperke van die geskiedenis het kollektiwismes geheers wat niks geken het behalwe die verveligheid van die alleenpraak nie.

Geslagtelank was die blote gedagte dat 'n individu reg kon wees in 'n meningsverskil met die gesamentlike mening van die kollektiwiteit, vir die massas van die aarde haas ondenkbaar. En dit is nie moeilik om te sien dat ons, die mense van die wêreld, weer 'n tydperk binnegaan waar ons alles in die werk sal moet stel om hierdie fundamentele waarheid te handhaaf nie.

In sekere Europese lande word godsdienstige vryheid vandag al aan bande gelê terwille van „nasionale eenheid,” in die Islamitiese lande was godsdiensvryheid maar nog altyd eintlik 'n blote min of meer gedwonge toegewing; die ware, volle burger is alleen hy wat in die „geloof” staan. In lande onder die Sowjet het die alleenpraak deur kommunistiese oorheersing vorms aangeneem wat vir ons amusant sou wees as hulle nie so tragies was en ons gewaarsku het van 'n dreigende gevaar van geestelike slawerny nie.

Waarom moet ons as gelowiges ons uiterste doen om die reg van vrye diskussie te handhaaf? Nie

alleen omdat die waarheid dikwels in die lig tree uit die konflik van menings nie. Dit is in der waarheid dikwels die geval, selfs 'n geopenbaarde skrifwaarheid registreer dikwels eers by ons of neem 'n voller, ryker betekenis aan na gedagtewisseling en bespreking daarvoor. So word nuwe insigte dikwels in die groot waarheid gebore en vensters vir ons oopgeskuif om dieper in te kyk in die skeppings- en genadewerk van God.

Maar ons het veral vryheid van meningsuiting nodig omdat die alleenspraak lei na solipsisme, met ander woorde dit sluit die beweging, die party, die staat of die kerk in 'n geweldige eensaamheid in.

Die bekende woorde van lord Acton hou nog 'n nuttige waarskuwing in: „All power corrupts us, and absolute power corrupts us absolutely.”

Daarom sal geen kollektiwiteit wat alle opposisie uitskakel of stilmaak, korrupsie vryspring nie. Ons as mense is so gemaak dat ons weerspreek moet word of ons ontaard en word bandeloos en maak ons wil absoluut.

Tereg het 'n groot Europese kerkman onlangs gesê: „Ons het vryheid van spraak nodig, nie omdat die mens so wys is dat ons noodwendig deur bespreking die waarheid vind nie, maar omdat ons mense so boos en so dwaas is dat indien ons nie weerspreek word nie, ons ons eie stemme sal aansien vir die stem van God.”

Maar vir ons as gelowiges en burgers van 'n land waar vryheid heers, lê dit ook hierdie ekstra besef op van ons verantwoordelikheid om eerstens in beginsel vir vrye meningsuiting te staan maar daarby te waak dat ook dit nie ontaard in losbandigheid nie. Om Sy seëninge vir die individu en in land en volk te lewer, moet die vryheid op elke lewensterrein bepaal en gekenmerk word deur voortdurende waaksaamheid.

Deur die Prediker—Dagbreek.

What is nationalism? It is an ignoble patriotism exaggerated till it has lost all meaning, which bears the same relation to the noble and healthy mind as the fixed idea of an imbecile to normal convictions

—Dr. A. Schweitzer.

CONFERENCE IMPRESSIONS

THE LAST AND THE NEXT

IN TOWN . . .

To the Editor, **The Black Sash**,

The Conference opened in a spirit of apprehension. There seemed to be doubt as to whether the Black Sash had achieved anything or if, indeed, it had done more harm than good. It was not long before that spirit was completely dispelled. It was evident that there was much still to be done—work that no political party could do.

With this assurance Conference set to work with a will and did much constructive thinking and came to certain definite decisions.

The resolutions passed were more concrete and constructive than any decisions taken in the past. Our policy has moved from the negative to the constructive line. We have now something definite to work for.

The need for establishing the climate of opinion whereby the public will realise the necessity for a new Constitution for South Africa is of the first importance. It is becoming more and more evident to us that there is a danger of a republic being accepted in this country under the existing Constitution. As far as true South Africans are concerned the Constitution has been destroyed. It is now an instrument which any unscrupulous government can manipulate at will. South Africa needs a rigid Constitution in which the fundamental liberties and basic rights of all the people are enshrined. There is a limitless field of work and study to be done in this aspect of our work alone.

The resolution of bringing pressure to bear on all those concerned with the making and implementation of unjust laws is one of the most effective ways of realising our aims and objects. The Southern Transvaal Region has met with not negligible results in that it has drawn the attention of the public to the danger of removing rights from one section of the population, for this inevitably removes the rights from all sections. It has expedited the lifting of the ban on more than 10 Africans being allowed to attend meetings. What is more it drew a lengthy reply and explanation from the Minister of Native Affairs, when a letter was written to him asking him to receive a deputation from the Black Sash to discuss the ban. This resolution offers endless ways of bringing direct pressure on those in authority and is possible of great achievement.

The third resolution of giving direct help to those affected by unjust legislation is a very worthwhile one. While it assures a more complete knowledge of the facts for our own members and will alter their thinking to a great extent, it will give very real assistance to those who need it most.

As a general impression the Conference was an exciting one. It left one with the desire to get on

with the job and to do it thoroughly. It was felt that those who have drifted away from the Black Sash cannot fail to be impressed and that here at last is work for every individual member to do.

In Johannesburg we feel that once this very full programme is properly in operation, our membership should consolidate and increase.

J. SINCLAIR.

To the Editor, **The Black Sash**,

I believe practical work will help the Sash find common ground with the general public. When people say, "Why do you stand around air-ports all the time?" etc. we can and have explained to them our new ideas and many have changed their opinion of us.

We feel that it is quite in order, apart from the deprivation of rights and liberties, to stress again and again the inhuman aspect of the various laws and their amendments and implementation. It is this which will disturb people more effectively than the abstract ideals. We cannot, of course, do without the latter, but they are more difficult to "sell."

One gratifying thing is that all the members we have now are quite sure that they want the Sash to go on, know why they are still members, and are waiting to get going. Our minds are not obscured by disconcerting things like a general election.

I am sure we all expect the next conference to consolidate all the proposals for active work and education which were put forward at the Special Conference.

DIANA DAVIS,
Port Elizabeth.

IN THE COUNTRY . . .

To the Editor, **The Black Sash**,

Mrs. Green's stimulating "Special Conference Impressions" in the August issue must have helped to revive the constructive spirit of the June Conference in some of us in whom that spirit was becoming a little dim. For—let us face it—in the country regions we have experienced a melancholy flagging in the "determination, energy and enthusiasm" which are required of us. Here, in my own Region, we put everything into the Election fight. It was a **personal** fight, and its failure caused a reaction of profound despondency. With us, no-one is anonymous, so "husband trouble" and genuine fear of victimisation are urgent realities. "What is the use of carrying on?" and "What good can WE do?" are questions which sometimes seem unanswerable.

The Conference resolution urging members to undertake practical work amongst those deprived of civil rights and liberties has little reality for us,

because in a country region it is almost impossible to implement. Lacking a local press, we hear of cases or know what is happening under, say, the Group Areas Act, only when action is too late even if, earlier, it might have been effective. We know also that in many instances the intervention of the bitterly disliked Black Sash would do more harm than good. Such work as the feeding of native school-children—victims of “unjust and discriminatory” regulations — has generally already been undertaken by organisations such as the Child Welfare Society or the Rotary Anns. Since they can command wider support than the Sash, we recognise that they can do the job better, though of course many of the keenest workers are Black Sash members.

We had hoped that the Black Sash might have tackled the problem of the political indoctrination of school-children—an abuse of which country members are intimately aware. The Conference, however, turned it down on principle. The difficulty would have been to combat indoctrination without becoming tarred with the same brush, without ourselves competing for the children’s minds. Nevertheless, this might have been made an issue at the forthcoming Provincial Elections by challenging every candidate to work for a united nation by the introduction of legislation penalising teachers convicted of the offence. The shelving of this whole vital matter was a disappointment to us. We hope the October Conference may have second thoughts about this as Black Sash work.

Whatever the decisions of the Cape Town Conference may be, we have the problem—what is the present job of the country regions? For we know we ARE important; that it IS important that we carry on. Nationalist strength is in the country areas and it is there, ultimately, that a change of heart must come if South Africa is to survive. So we have to remain alive, keep the organisation ticking over, our members alert and informed. But our really important job is to keep the whole Black Sash in touch with the outlook of the country areas—an outlook which must be understood and MUST be kept in mind because it is the final key to the whole situation. And we must give the whole movement the moral support of country members—support which the Nationalists fear more than one might suppose.

It is a difficult, unexciting programme, calling for steadfastness of purpose rather than the stimulating action required of Black Sash members who can play a more positive part. We shall lose members; we shall get few recruits because we have so little to offer them. But somehow we shall carry on—because WE MUST.

B. H. TRACEY.

To the Editor, **The Black Sash,**

I have been ruminating on the Resolutions passed at the Special National Conference, and wondering how a country region such as ours can implement them. I found these ruminations very depressing and I tried to put myself in a more constructive

frame of mind by wondering what I would like to see emanating from the Annual National Conference in October.

Living in a small country town in the Transvaal, where no-one is anonymous, we have found that our active protests, haunts, vigils and demonstrations etc. were taken, quite rightly, as criticism of the present Government and therefore, quite wrongly, as being “Un-South-African” and disloyal to our country. Any attempt to put over the Black Sash point of view, in person, has invariably been met either with frank disbelief or, which is far more shattering, with cold hatred. Only those members who have lived in the Platteland and have tried to argue with the more embittered Nationalist, will realise what we are up against. We hold our meetings; we talk to the converted only; we seem to get no further. We have no Constitutional experts to prepare blue-prints for brighter and better constitutions for South Africa; the bulk of our practical welfare work is already being done by individual members of the Black Sash.

I, personally, consider that our only hope lies in propaganda, and by this I mean the right type of propaganda put out in the right way to the right recipients. It is no use making brilliant speeches to those who already agree with you. It is no good telling the victims of unjust and discriminatory laws that they are being badly treated. They know it already. Printed propaganda has been successful in this area, as we know it was read, but it is expensive and wasteful.

I would like to see the October Conference come to light with ideas for practical propaganda which will reach the Nationalist supporters. For instance—

Through the Afrikaans Press:

Would it not be possible for someone of Mrs. Green’s calibre to approach the Afrikaans Press and ask if they will accept and publish regular articles expressing the Black Sash point of view? I have in mind something of the “Jan Burger” type, which appears in “**The Star.**” If the Nationalist Press refuses to accept such articles, the new United Party Afrikaans papers would be the next best thing, as they are also read by some Nationalists.

Through practical Welfare Work:

We have found that most of our local welfare work is already being organised or carried out by individual members of the Black Sash. It is more than likely that the same conditions prevail in other regions. I suggest that these members try calling on their Nationalist friends, acquaintances and local organisations to assist them, and so let the Nationalist women see for themselves the results of the discriminatory laws.

I am sure there must be many practical ways of influencing the electorate, and I hope that Conference will try to ensure that our propaganda reaches the right people.

S.M.P.

A Plea: Decentralize The Government

G. E. LEE—Sunday Times, July 20, 1958.

SOUTH AFRICA is almost unique among modernly-constructed states in that it has placed well-nigh despotic powers in the hands of a central government, and we are being rightly chastised for our folly.

This excessive concentration of power at the centre is one of the main reasons why our land seems to be heading for ruin, in spite of a majority of decent people who would like it otherwise.

Why?

Why did we do it? Why was Natal's plea at the National Convention for a federal system overruled?

A few concessions were made in the shape of the provincial system and some entrenchments in the constitution—which could be easily circumvented by a group of office-holders prepared to lay aside democratic principles and political conventions to get technical legal sanction for their acts.

I believe the answer is three-fold.

First, no one believed that South African politicians would sink so low.

Second, the Afrikaner architects of union felt that under such a flexible constitution the Afrikaner would more speedily assert his rights, if not indeed become the dominant partner.

Third, the British section saw the trade advantages of a completely centralised form of government.

Decisions are imposed

A centralised form of government is suitable only where there is a homogeneous community, preferably in a small area, with a long tradition of working together and where certain democratic principles have come to be accepted by all parties.

Britain is an example. But even there centralised government has not always been successful, as the case of Ireland clearly shows.

Where everything is centralised, the governmental machine becomes choked. There is no time to deal properly with the interests of the various sections. More and more bureaucracy takes over, because of the sheer inability of a central parliament to exercise adequate supervision.

More and more decisions are imposed without consultation or agreement. This happens even under a democratic government. How much greater is the evil when the central government seeks to impose its ideologies at every level, provincial, municipal and even over local bodies such as school boards, hospital boards and transportation boards.

The only way

It is noteworthy that nearly all modernly-constructed states are federal in form, and for a good

reason—it is the only form that works. It is the only way in which the trade and defence advantages of larger-scale working can be harmonised with liberty.

The United States, Canada and Australia are a few examples.

The instance of Canada is particularly significant for South Africa. Like South Africa, Canada started off with a centralised constitution, with two races differing in language, religion, traditions and temperament. One race, the French, was smarting under defeat in war; and, as in the case of South Africa, relations, instead of getting better with the passing of time, grew steadily worse.

Then Lord Durham, perceiving the root of the trouble, recommended in the Durham Report that the centralised constitution should be scrapped and a federal constitution substituted.

That was done. Canada has since gone ahead and is now the leading Dominion of the Commonwealth.

South Africa can do the same. There is this difference. Canada was under British control at the time and she was given a federal constitution by the British Parliament. We, in South Africa, have to achieve one for ourselves.

Our present flexible constitution, with practically all power placed in the hands of a central government which can overrule the provinces and municipalities, if it desires, is an open invitation to dictators.

The electoral system which puts such a government in power can be manipulated to any desired extent.

Dangerous

Since the passage of the South Africa Act Amendment Act through the joint sitting technique, with the aid of the packed Senate, South Africa has been living practically without a constitution—a most dangerous state of affairs.

Even the limited entrenchments of the Act of Union have been swept away and can never be re-entrenched (save for the equal language rights entrenchment, which can be removed at will). Before we can expect any health in the body politic, it is essential that we have a new and better constitution, following a new National Convention.

We must have a far more rigid constitution, with all individual rights entrenched. And as a safeguard of these individual rights, we must entrench the powers of local bodies to uphold them.

In a multi-racial society such as South Africa, we must also entrench the rights of the various races, particularly minority races.

As Mr. Donald Molteno, Q.C., president of the Institute of Race Relations, said in Port Elizabeth on June 25, "A solution inherently possible in South Africa, without the use of force, is one based on

partnership, division of power on federal lines, entrenchment of human rights, regardless of race, and protection of minority groups."

This will make for harmony. Where domination is forever impossible, ambitious men will turn their interests in more useful directions than in stirring up racial strife.

The position is somewhat analagous to that in international politics, where, in a state of insecurity, each nation seeks to ensure its own defence by weakening the defence of its neighbour.

The Whites are oppressing the Blacks to-day because they fear that otherwise the Blacks will oppress them to-morrow. This is the road to perpetual conflict and ultimate ruin.

The only cure is to set up an impartial authority, to which all must bow. Inside the State, this authority is the constitution. When all groups feel secure, then at last will a true South Africanism be born.

Inhumanity is the inevitable logic of an outlook that treats an individual not as a unique personality but merely as an item, a unit, in a "group identity."

—Prof. Keet.

Candid Comments

Sober Realism

We must not follow a policy that we could not justify before God and our Christian conscience. The end must never sanctify the means. The White man's struggle to survive should certainly not be coupled with injustice towards others.

—Ds. W. A. Landman (retiring chairman of Sabra), reported in Die Burger, 1st May 1958.

Taxing the Voteless

Is there any other country but ours that taxes the poorest section of the community most heavily? Already countries abroad say of us that our thinking is a century behind the rest of the world, and that we don't read the New Testament.

(Letter to the Daily Despatch, signed Mary Bell).

No Permanent Guardianship.

The great question facing the Whites in South Africa is, what is to be done with the Non-Whites who have reached maturity? Guardianship is tyranny unless it is applied in accordance with the principles of Holy Writ. This requires, first, that the minor shall be taught to become an adult. Secondly the minor must be given his adult status as soon as he is ripe for it. There can never be such a thing as a permanently minor status.

—Professor J. C. G. Kotze, Theological Seminary, Stellenbosch, reported in Die Burger, 1st May 1958.

The Black Sash, September, '58

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

THE other evening I was visited by a member of one of the lesser known sects of the Protestant Church. The gentleman's main argument was that one cannot worship a god without first knowing his name. In this case, my informant insisted that the name was Jehovah, and that when we had acknowledged that Name we should all—I must ask his pardon if I have misunderstood him—be "saved."

Now this struck me at the time as being the oddest of beliefs; for I can "know" an individual very thoroughly without necessarily being acquainted with his correct name, and I do worship, humbly, That which I do not know.

So odd a contention continued to interest me, and I began to work out permutations and combinations with a name as the central idea. It then began to be apparent that while "Jehovah" was as unrelated to any living idea (for me) as granite, if the name was—say—gentleness, loving kindness, power, security, vengeance, hate, the response was immediate and vital.

I wonder what would happen to this sick world—and in particular our own sick land, if every congregation in every church, Christian or Asian, should ask its minister to define in clear and unequivocal terms the Name, or Names of that god he urges them to worship?

If that God's attributes, or Names, are "gentleness" and "loving kindness," can His ministers even preach, or believe in, hate and bitterness, separation and self superiority?

Or is it true, as it was true at the time of Christ, that our spiritual leaders have made God in their own image, and have endowed Him with their own beliefs?

How shocked an orthodox Christian would be if you were to say casually to him one day: "What are **your** God's Names? **Mine's** "gentleness" and "compassion."

But then what **does** he mean when he says: "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name—" every time he prays—or hasn't he thought that far?

DOREEN RANKIN.

Washington Post Broadcast

MISS MURIEL BOWEN, of the Washington Post Broadcast Station, is touring the Commonwealth in order to interview the political leaders in each important centre. From Johannesburg and Pretoria, she chose for her interviews Mr. Eric Louw and Mrs. Ruth Foley.

Because of the time limit of four minutes, it was a most difficult interview to prepare; yet Mrs. Foley managed it perfectly, and Miss Bowen told a member of the Central Executive that our President had given one of the best interviews of the tour.

FROM OUR POSTBAG

The Editor, **The Black Sash.**

I was most interested to see Mrs. Margaret Roberts' article in the May number of *Black Sash*, in which she discussed an article of mine which had appeared in the February number.

Let me say at once that I am in full agreement with Mrs. Roberts' economic theories, and if the restrictions on all forms of African enterprise were to be removed, would expect, as she does, much increased prosperity for all. My article certainly did not express, nor do I hold, the views ascribed to me by Mrs. Roberts, and I can only suggest, with diffidence, that she reads the article again.

I shall try to put into different words what I did say.

If Africans were now to be permitted to equip themselves to perform skilled jobs, there are many Europeans who would find themselves on a level lower than the abler Africans. They would not like this, and since they now hold political power in the form of the vote, they will not allow the Africans to rise.

I made no comparison between the British and the South African economy, but said in effect that other nations had also had to endure changes in the status of privileged classes, and cited the plight of the aristocracy in England as an example. (As a matter of interest, in this case political and economic events were for once moving in the same direction. In South Africa at the moment they are diametrically opposed).

Finally, I wish I did think that the economic outlook was the most important aspect of South Africa's future. That is more easily remediable than a sickness of the soul and spirit, which I believe to be a far greater danger, particularly to the youth of South Africa.

(Mrs.) M. DEELMAN.

The Editor, **The Black Sash.**

I have been a regular reader of "*The Black Sash*" since its first issue. As such I was surprised to see such an article as that on the Group Areas Act included in the June/July number.

Surely nothing can justify that Act. Why, then, use space in the magazine of a body formed to uphold honour and justice and to fight for the repeal of immoral and oppressive laws, for an article which tries to justify such a law?

That the Group Areas Act is unjust should be clear to the meanest intelligence. Like all the apartheid legislation of this Government it serves to filch from voteless, defenceless non-Europeans their property and other rights for the supposed benefit of the Whites. Under that Act all the valuable land everywhere is allocated to the Whites.

I believe that the non-Europeans do not wish to live among the Whites and that given reasonably nearly equal amenities the races would voluntarily segregate their residential areas. On what possible ground of morality to say nothing of Christianity can one justify a law which deprives Africans of a

right to own property or to carry on a trade or profession where hundreds of thousands of their fellows are employed; which drives Indians out of long established businesses and means their ruin; and which uproots a whole township of Coloured people with colossal loss in addition to the mental and physical disturbance they will suffer?

F. A. W. LUCAS.

The Editor, **The Black Sash.**

As a member of the *Black Sash* I wish to protest against the inclusion in the June/July number of the magazine of the article entitled "*The Group Areas Act.*"

I have always considered the chief value of the magazine was as a method of propaganda. And each month I send two copies abroad. This month I have removed the page with this article, as I did not think it right to give the impression that the *Black Sash* approved of the views expressed, when I know to a great many of our members they are abhorrent.

Personally, I consider his views on "*Group Areas*" old fashioned, unjust and unchristian. The plans he speaks of for the early days, with its buffer strips, ethnic grouping, etc., is simply enforced apartheid, and I object most strongly to such views being circulated through the medium of the "*Black Sash.*"

ANGRY MEMBER.

To the Editor, **The Black Sash,**

I was stunned to find, in the June/July issue of the *Black Sash* magazine, such an article on the Group Areas Act as the one of which you published the first part. It is permissible, and perhaps even sensible, for you to print a written debate on a difficult political subject. This is, however, the first time I have known a debate opened by those opposing the principle of the motion! Surely the motion, in this magazine, must be that the Group Areas Act is unjust and discriminatory, for the *Black Sash* has shown, by its protests, that it opposes it on those grounds. Yet the subject is opened by a writer who, quite obviously, supports the principles of the Act, condones South African racialism, which is the cause of such legislation being introduced and passed, and criticises only the application of the Act. Even his criticism allows for the hardships of the application being partially due to propaganda and agitation against the Act. Is the *Black Sash* being blamed too by Mr. Bond for protesting against the injustice of the Group Areas Act?

In addition, the article is neither factual nor constructive.

As for the Editor's comment that it is a "clear exposition," presumably of the Act as that is the title of the article—in the part published the Act is mentioned only three times, "something like the Act" is referred to hypothetically once, and only in the last paragraph, is one solitary example of the details of the implementation of the Act given, and that as it effects one small piece of Johannesburg alone. That you, Madam Editor, feel merely that

you do not necessarily agree with the writer, must have come as a shock to your readers.

PEGGY BRITTEN.

The Editor, *The Black Sash*.

WHO KNOWS THE SASH IN LONDON?

Sitting in a bus last week, I found myself next to a black man who looked to me very much as if he might be a fellow South African. So I took out my Black Sash Diary, and holding the cover so that he could see it, looked at my non-existent appointments within! The reaction came at once: "You are from South Africa?" "Yes, are you?" "No, I am from Ghana." "Do you then know about the Black Sash?" "O yes, I am very interested in South Africa and have read about this women's movement." We exchanged addresses and soon met in our flat to spend an evening together. He is at present an advanced student here. He is most intelligent and alert, and we spent a very interesting evening discussing South African and Ghanaian problems. As a result of his knowledge of what the Black Sash stood for, he was quite prepared to talk without any reservations, even being exceedingly critical of the present rule in Ghana. We all felt that the sincere desire to find an honest solution for racial problems facing us was a warm human bond which no racialists would be able to break because it was woven from an urge in the human race to approach problems truthfully and with an open mind. Afterwards I received from him a most charming note, the keynote of which was hope and joy at meeting South Africans (especially of Boer descent, he said) who are trying to win the confidence of the Coloured races and to influence the leaders among them. He expressed the hope that in due course the solution of the racial problem will come from "soberminded, civilised, broad-minded and genuinely sincere people rather than from the rough, narrowminded fanatics and obscurantists in either camp!" A sane approach indeed!

ANNA MARAIS.

The Editor, *The Black Sash*.

Some time ago I asked you to reprint a most excellent article which appeared in your issue of July, 1957, on the Refugee Camps in the Anglo-Boer War. I was deeply disappointed when told that was impossible as from my experience such statements of fact should be made publicly again and again to counteract the malicious fables on the subject which circulate freely in the country.

Since writing I have been so fortunate as to meet two persons who knew these camps from the inside. One was an old gentleman who had no complaint whatever against the camps as he was comfortable and well treated. The other was younger and a woman. She was in the camps as a child with her mother, and said "those tales of ill-treatment are all lies. We were very happy in the camp. I was only a child, seven or eight years old, and I had a lovely time." She repeated, "I had a lovely time." And she added that that was why she and her friend (an Afrikaner lady who introduced me) hated the Nats. so because they were deliberately disseminating falsehoods to serve their own

The Black Sash, September, '58

political purposes. The "powdered glass" we are told was administered to those "unfortunate women and children" was Epsom (or other) medicinal salts with which the veld farmer's wife was then unfamiliar.

Other evidence I have had since from an old gentleman who fought in the British Army. He became friendly with a family who were interned, the man as a prisoner of war, and he had nothing to say against his treatment. His wife and children, so they said themselves, were simply starving when taken in. She was given a large tent for herself and her children and she was allowed to cook her own food. In a short time they were plump and healthy and had nothing but gratitude for the kindly way they were taken care of.

But it is slow work overtaking a lie.

G. E. DEWAR.

The Editor apologises for an incorrect assumption in a letter headed "A Saner Franchise" in our June/July magazine. The writer wished to say, "The voluntary and purposeful disbandment of all the political parties opposed to the Nationalists might create an alignment of Nationalist Party versus the rest of South Africa." And later, "An improvement might be to impose a standard qualification for white and non-white. No non-white voting should be allowed without an essential precaution."

GEMS FROM HANSARD

DR. VAN NIEROP: Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Government for the change which was made in the ceremony of the opening of Parliament. . . . I just wanted to draw your attention briefly to the position we had in South Africa 20 years ago. There are members in the House who did not attend that ceremony because in our opinion it was un-South African. . . . But with the last opening of Parliament it became possible for all members of Parliament to do so, because the South African anthem only was played and only the South African flag was flown. . . . We therefore want to express our gratitude, on behalf of the people of South Africa, for the fact that the Government has now made it possible for us to attend the opening of Parliament.

MR. LAWRENCE: Now that the hon. member for Mossel Bay (Dr. van Nierop) has raised the question of the amenities at the opening ceremony, may I remind him that, whereas according to him there was a time when many members could not attend this opening ceremony for the reasons he gave, at present many members find themselves in this difficulty, that they cannot attend the opening ceremony because there is no room for them, because there are too many Senators!

—(Hansard, 1958 p. 1063-1064).

Die Swart Serp, September '58

THE GROUP AREAS ACT

An Expression of Opinion by William Bond

No. 3

Opinions expressed in signed articles are not official Black Sash views.

So much for the main provisions of the law; now let us see what the Government has done with it.

First they appointed the members of the Group Areas Board under the Chairmanship of Mr. de Vos Hugo, a conscientious, likeable advocate who previously had specialised in Patent Law. His duties have brought him into conflict with the most able Q.C.'s in the country at public hearings and in the course of litigation, and he has not always emerged successfully, as is quite understandable. His most notable fellow member is Mr. J. F. J. van Rensburg, the former Commandant-General of the Ossewa Brandwag.

A small (much too small) staff of Civil Servants was placed at the Board's disposal. There appears to be no statistical staff, no research staff, and no drawing office staff. (One of the most annoying features of attending a Group Areas hearing is trying to co-ordinate the proposals and counter-proposals of various speakers, each of whom uses a different map).

The Minister then issued some general proclamations (e.g. proclaiming controlled and specified areas). Almost immediately thereafter various defects began to appear in the Act, and at every session of Parliament to date some amendments have been introduced. More are promised in the 1957 Session.

In general the administration of the Act has been abominable. In 1954, for instance, a proclamation was issued with the intention of exempting mine employees and farm labourers from obtaining permits in controlled areas. The Government Law Advisers soon after found that the proclamation said the exact opposite, and the Group Areas Board became the laughing stock of the Civil Service. Instead of withdrawing the proclamation and issuing another, the Board tried to save face by amending the Act, quite unnecessarily, in 1955. Thereafter they cheerfully issued a new proclamation.

Unfortunately the new proclamation was stated to take effect on a date three days before the amending Act, in terms of which it was issued, became law. It was therefore ultra vires, and the Civil Service again roared with laughter. The Board has not yet, 18 months later, dared to have a third attempt.

Then there was the case of Bosmot and New Monteleo. The Minister, on the Board's recommendation, lightheartedly proclaimed those town-

ships as Group Areas for ownership and residential occupation by Johannesburg Cape Coloureds. The townships were:—

- (a) Restricted in their title-deeds to industrial purposes, and
- (b) In the Roodepoort-Maraisburg municipality.

It is quite probable that the Board was blissfully unaware of those facts, but it certainly won't admit as much.

All proclamations of Group Areas and the issues of many types of permit require preliminary investigations by the Board, and these normally involve public hearings. The procedure usually goes something like this:—

1. The Nationalist majority on a town council, having heard that the Group Areas Act will "fix the coolies," calls in an advocate to tell them all about it.
2. The advocate having told them that they must find alternative sites for Indians, etc., the amateur planners get busy and select a site that usually is well away from roads and services and consists of bare veld.
3. Proposals are then submitted to the Group Areas Board, which advertises them in newspapers (they need not be advertised in the Government Gazette) circulating in the district. The advertisement does not state the proposals; it simply tells where they can be inspected. Everyone with an interest (which must be a material interest, not a moral one) in the proposals is invited to submit representations within a specified time, which may be as little as 10 days after the advertisement appears.
4. Interested parties then have to move very fast, even if three weeks is allowed (which is about average). Many of them will fail to see the advertisement, and will hear about the proposals days late. (Once the entire mining industry, which is always on the look-out for Group Areas advertisements, did not hear of an important advertisement until a week after it had appeared). They must then inspect the proposals at the local Town Hall or in Pretoria, study them on the ground, and get a legal representative to prepare and submit their case. Is it any wonder that representations and counter-proposals are usually as half-baked as the original proposals, and factual information is hardly ever forthcoming at public hearings?
5. In due course a public hearing is advertised in the press; this advertisement too is often missed.
6. The public hearing assembles, attended by a galaxy of legal talent, representatives of large property owners, masses of Indians, a few

cranks, members of the Special Branch, and a few Nationalist M.P.C.'s and Councillors. Other political parties invariably ignore the hearing. (WHY?) Names and interests are recorded, counsel for the municipality outlines the proposals, and points of law are argued at length. Often the hearing adjourns soon after it starts so as to allow a ruling to be tested in the Supreme Court.

7. A hurried tour of inspection takes place, proposals and counter-proposals are argued at length with rapidly waning public interest, and the hearing either terminates or is adjourned pending the advertising of further proposals. (No proposals can be discussed unless previously advertised).
8. The rest is usually silence. The number of proclamations of Group Areas is insignificant in relation to the number of proposals investigated.

(To be continued)

Cape Western — Visit to the Senate

ON Thursday, 24th July, the afternoon on which the Criminal Courts Bill reached the Senate, sixteen members of the Sash went in twos to interview individual Senators (names drawn rather at random from the Transvaal, Cape and O.F.S.) to ask their co-operation in getting the Bill amended so that (1) it would not give the Minister the right to appoint judges in cases in which he represents the Prosecution; (2) it would not change conditions for the accused who would lose the right they had originally to choose a Judge and Assessors.

Many also made the point that adverse criticism from overseas would be greatly increased as news of these extraordinary powers given to the Minister became common knowledge.

Some Sashers met only the granite featured Yes-men "who vote just as their leaders tell-'em-to," but others had more lively conversations—Senators actually acknowledging a point here and there.

One Senator declared that he could do nothing about it (what is he there spending public money for?) and one made the terrific confession that if he were to try to do anything about it, it was as much as his job was worth.

We hope that this sort of visit will bring home to Legislators that there is an active body of people outside of party politics who are alerted and deeply concerned about these grave questions.

Each Senator concerned has received a letter thanking him for his kind hearing and hoping that there will be further opportunities to discuss matters of importance.

The Black Sash, September, '58

THREADS FROM THE SASH

MEMBERS of the East London Branch are busy collecting money for the Mayor's school feeding fund, and Mrs. Margaret Pollock represents the Branch on the Committee. This campaign to collect money followed from the Provincial Council's refusal to introduce an amended supplementary school feeding scheme.

The first copy of the Border Bulletin is to hand, and we congratulate the editors on their enterprising effort.

* * *

BECAUSE the members of the Northern Transvaal Regional Conference decided that they knew little about the hardships which are the result of our present laws, they have decided to study the Group Areas Act practically. They have asked H. E. Joosur, the author of "Bitterness Towards Indians," to speak to them, and are arranging a visit to the areas in Pretoria that are affected by the Group Areas Proclamations.

* * *

THE article "The Challenge and Our Response," which appeared in the June/July issue, was a condensed version of a lecture given by Professor Monica Wilson. This was one of a group of lectures printed in a booklet issued by the Cape Western Region.

* * *

MRS. FOLEY visited the Witbank Branch in August, and was delighted with their plans for expansion.

* * *

NATAL Coastal Branches have worked out a novel, and very successful, way of holding meetings. Speakers are invited to answer questions at informal tea-parties, to which each member gains admission only by bringing a non-member.

* * *

TEA parties seem to be in vogue in the Sash. Southern Transvaal are organising a series of these to which they are inviting original members, who have since resigned or become inactive. This seems a pleasant and sensible way to go about the work of consolidating the Sash.

* * *

THE meeting on increased African Taxation, which the Southern Transvaal Region had been unable to hold on the Johannesburg City Hall Steps, was held in St. Luke's Hall on 2nd September. The meeting was addressed by Mr. R. Hacking, representing commerce, Dr. Ellen Hellman, past President of the Institute of Race Relations, and Mrs. Mary Walker, on behalf of housewives, Mr. Oliver Tambo, secretary of the A.N.C., represented "the man who must pay."

The Right To Public Protest

THERE have been further developments in the extraordinary situation caused in Johannesburg by Dr. Verwoerd's ban on the attendance at meetings of 10 or more Africans. The result of a further application to the City Council to hold a meeting to protest against the 18-year old vote made it clear that the ban had, in effect, deprived all races of the democratic rights of free speech and assembly. The whole result of this has been that in attempting to hold three protest meetings on the City Hall steps on three different issues the Black Sash has lodged a most effective protest against a fourth issue—Dr. Verwoerd's ban on the attendance at meetings of 10 or more Africans. This ban has now been lifted by proclamation in the Government Gazette.

The following is the reply, from Dr. Verwoerd's secretary, to the Southern Transvaal Region's request to Dr. Verwoerd to receive a deputation from the Black Sash:

"On behalf of the Honourable the Minister of Native Affairs, I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 11th August, 1958. He wishes me to inform you that no good purpose can be served by receiving a deputation from your organisation to discuss the ban on Native meetings imposed in certain areas in April, 1958. From the outset the Minister himself desired to restrict the period of the ban to the object for which it was originally imposed. Urgent requests from his Department and other official sources to retain the ban in certain of these areas, could not however be refused by him. In the meantime he had called for a report every fortnight to ascertain when the ban could be lifted in the areas concerned and repeatedly gave instructions that the moment this was deemed possible in any particular area he should be informed as a matter of urgency. As a result the ban was lifted in certain areas on the 27th June, 1958, by Government Notice 938 and he recently issued instructions that the same could now be done with regard to the Witwatersrand and the other areas to which the ban still applies.

"The ban was never aimed at meetings or gatherings of Europeans in connection with matters appertaining mainly to Europeans, although it could not be avoided that the ban affects such meetings held in the open air, as Natives like other races are attracted to gatherings and it is known that third parties have often made use of the presence of Natives to defeat the objects of the ban. There would of course be no question of the ban interfering with a meeting held in a hall, where the organisers would be able to exclude Natives. No ordinary rights of citizens were therefore at stake but the preservation of law and order demanded certain steps which were part of the law of the land since 1927.

"However, as the Honourable the Minister has no desire to interfere with the affairs of Europeans where interference can be avoided without preju-

dice to Native administration, he has given instructions that if such a situation should develop again, permission should not ordinarily be refused when an open-air meeting is to be held in respect of matters chiefly affecting Europeans. For instance unless there were exceptional circumstances warranting such a step, permission would not be withheld in respect of an open-air meeting to protest against votes for the 18-year old, but an entirely different view would have to be taken of a meeting, even if it were organised by Europeans, to protest against the increase of the general tax payable by Natives if this were to be held while there were good reasons for still banning meetings by Natives."

The Southern Transvaal Region have replied to Dr. Verwoerd querying the disturbing overtones to this letter, for it does not give the impression that ordinary freedom of speech has been restored.

The fact that "the Minister has no desire to interfere with the affairs of Europeans where interference can be avoided without prejudice to Native administration," is of doubtful comfort to us; and it is disturbing to be told, "Unless there were exceptional circumstances warranting such a step, permission would not be withheld in respect of an open-air meeting to protest against votes for the 18-year-old, but an entirely different view would have to be taken of a meeting, even if it were organised by Europeans, to protest against the increase of the general tax



(With acknowledgements to Bob Connolly and the Rand Daily Mail)

payable by Natives if this were to be held while there were good reasons for still banning meetings by Natives."

The editor of the Sunday Times headed his leader on this letter, "Dangerous Idea," for its tone is dictatorial, and it seems to contain the assumption that Dr. Verwoerd has the right to decide both when (and if) citizens may hold public meetings, and what they shall be allowed to discuss. If this is the case, freedom of speech no longer exists.

Further, we feel that it is very much in the public interest that the reasons for the "urgent requests" to retain the ban should be ascertained and published, since they must obviously have had reference to circumstances or crises quite other than a strike, which was to have been held so many months ago. We wonder why, in a democratic state, so much secrecy is necessary. Nor does the Black Sash understand the statement, "third parties have often made use of the presence of Natives to defeat the objects of the ban." We find this capable of many interpretations.

Subsequent events have justified our misgivings. The police have now "requested" the City Council to refuse permission for the holding of any public meetings at all on the City Hall steps. They have said that unless the Council agrees to this "request" legislation will be passed to compel them to do so. We are anxiously awaiting the Council's decision.

This South Africa

From Letter to Editor, Evening Post.

Returning from the north by car recently I was not a little shocked at an incident which occurred less than 100 miles south of Johannesburg.

Pulling up for petrol, I saw alongside an open van, also taking petrol.

What caught my attention was that the van was surmounted by a sort of home-made cage, such as would be necessary for conveying livestock to market, only, in this case, it was not animals but human beings who were standing packed together, shivering with cold. (It can be cold in the Transvaal).

The African attendant at the pumps was a very civil man, so I asked him: "Whose van is that, and where are the men going?"

Imagine my horror when he replied quite casually, "They are prisoners; some farmer has bought them."

"The faith that is born of knowledge finds its object in an eternal order, bringing forth endless change, through endless time, in endless space."
—T. H. Huxley.

REGIONAL CHAIRS AND SECRETARIES

BORDER.

- C. Mrs. D. Curry, 3 Carisbrooke Road, Stirling Ext., East London.
- S. Mrs. M. G. Pollock, 106 Devereux Avenue, Vincent, East London.

CAPE EASTERN.

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

CAPE MIDLANDS.

- C. Mrs. Conroy, Watergift, Box 53, Beaufort West.
- S. Miss Conroy, Watergift, Box 53, Beaufort West.

CAPE NORTHERN.

- Chair: Mrs. M. Owens, 7 Howie Road, West End, Kimberley.
- S. Mrs. B. Buck, 3 Poole Street, Kimberley.

CAPE WESTERN.

- C. Mrs. M. Petersen, Beacon House, Klaassens Road, Wvnberg, Cape.
- Acting S. Mrs. M. Hendersen, 1 Kildare Road, Claremont, Cape Town.

LOWVELD.

- C. Mrs. Sandenbergh, Eastry, Plaston, Tvl.
- S. Mrs. B. Tracey, Pleasant Hill, Box 17, White River.

NATAL COASTAL REGION.

- C. Mrs. M. Scott, 16 Chelmsford Road, Durban.
- S. Mrs. J. F. Hill, 27 Meyrich Avenue, Durban.

NATAL MIDLANDS.

- C. Mrs. M. Corrigan, 306 Alexandra Road, Pietermaritzburg.
- S. Miss D. Anderson, Box 293, Pietermaritzburg.

NORTHERN TRANSVAAL.

- C. Mrs. A. Findlay, 296 Mears Street, Pretoria.

ORANGE FREE STATE.

- C. Mrs. H. O'Connor, P.O. Box 245, Bloemfontein.
- S. Mrs. R. Kruger, 4 Van Heyningen Street, Bloemfontein.

SOUTH-EASTERN TRANSVAAL.

- C. Mrs. M. Fourie, Box 222, Springs.
- S. Mrs. E. Gouldie, Marievale Mine, P.O. Marie shaft, Transvaal.

SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL.

- C. Mrs. V. Sinclair, 11 The Valley Road, West-cliff, Johannesburg.
- S. Mrs. D. Grant, 21 Victoria Avenue, Sandringham, Johannesburg.