

Colourland", to be added to the Africana section of the library.

All Branches

At our meeting in April Mrs. Robb gave an explanation of the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill.

In May Mr. David Welsh, a lecturer at U.C.T., gave us a preview of his paper entitled "Urbanisation and the Solidarity of Afrikaner Nationalism", which added a new dimension to our understanding of the verligte/verkrampste conflict. And in June Mr. Theo Kotze, of the Christian Institute, challenged and inspired us with his talk on "Religion in an Apartheid Society".

Several branches are to be congratulated on successful and worthwhile multi-racial gatherings they have held. In view of the increasing difficulties involved in getting to know people of other races, these efforts are to be especially commended. The Elgin picnic, held again this year on Miss Denniston's farm, not only provided R180 for Sash funds, but enabled all those who attended to spend a most relaxing and enjoyable day — in spite of inclement weather. Elgin branch members continue to keep in touch with the former residents of New Town, who are in resettlement villages.

Gardens Branch had an interesting and stimulating evening of music as their form of a Sash party. The sixty people who attended were most enthusiastic and responsive. Rosebank too succeeded in having a different sort of party. Theirs took the form of a play reading, which was very well received — as was the supper provided for the 80 odd members and guests.

The Tuesday Club, inspired by the Rondebosch Branch, has become so popular that a more accommodating venue has had to be found. The sharing in the running and organisation of the club has meant greater member participation and interest and a renewed vitality in the club.

Letters to the Press:

31.3.1969—Cape Argus — Bantu Amendment Bill

21.4.1969 — Cape Times — Community Development Amendment Bill.

12.5.1969 — Cape Times — on "raids" to enforce registrations for the Coloured Cadet training centres.

9.6.1969 — Cape Argus — on African education.

17.6.1969 — Cape Times — General Laws Amendment Bill.

A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NO REDRESS

GOD of Righteousness and Father of all Mankind, we pray for those Thy children who, through bodily infirmity or mental weakness, poverty or unemployment, social position or colour, circumstances or economic conditions, are deprived of the privilege of enjoying their Human Rights, or are precluded from seeking redress against the exploitation of which they are victims, and the wrongs which their fellowmen have inflicted upon them through thoughtlessness, selfishness or wilfulness.

Be Thou their Champion, O Lord! Forgive and suppress man's inhumanity to man — personal, social, legislative. Teach us the folly of professing love towards God Whom we cannot see, while we wrong those whom we do see. May we learn to keep the Great Injunction to love God above all that can be loved, and to love our fellowman, whatever his race, creed or colour, as much as we love ourselves.

Teach us so to live that we, under Thy Divine Guidance, may build a new hate-free, fear-free, greed-free world. Amen.

TRANSVAAL REGION

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

PROBLEM OF MAKING AN IMPACT:

THIS year we have been brought up against the problem of making an impact on the public and of getting our point of view across to people. This problem has been discussed every time we have discussed any course of action on any issue. A few weeks ago we received a report from one of the delegates at National Conference who had found all the fact papers and discussion rather boring and wondered if we were not too academic as an organisation. She felt that we were not making any appeal to people in general and that our methods of making protests were rather up in the air. This problem will, of course be discussed fully at conference this year. In the Transvaal we have come to feel that we cannot hope to influence anybody or to change any attitudes at all and that all we can do is to state our protest as strongly as is in our power, which is not always as strongly as we would like. Should we worry at all what our public image is? How important is the collection of facts and the presentation of these facts to the few people who will bother to

read them? What could we do to make our protest more audible? How far should we *be expedient in making protests and in collecting information.* All these questions and others will have to be discussed by this region at a time before this year's national conference in Maritzburg. Mrs. Carlson is leading a group who will discuss the whole problem of making protests and will have some thoughts to put before us later in the year. It is essential that the Black Sash should from time to time review its direction and methods. A political situation is always a fluid one but whatever the situation it is important that we should always keep before us our cardinal aims of exposing and opposing injustice and educating our members to recognise it whenever it happens.

SYMPOSIUM:

Arising out of this debate has come some *uncertainty as to whether we should proceed with the planned symposium before National conference.* This year's one was to have been on Urbanisation and its related problems in our society. Maritzburg is unhappy about holding it there because they feel their public would not show any interest and they do not have extensive press support. They feel it would be a mistake to attempt anything so big there. Some of the other regions agree with them and others want it to go ahead as planned. Obviously, as Maritzburg are our hosts for this conference we cannot go against their wishes and are now thinking of having a lecture on the subject on one afternoon at conference and then deciding at conference on the procedure for these symposia and whether they might not be more easily organised on a regional basis with the findings being made widely available.

PROTESTS THIS YEAR:

This year we have had some successful campaigns notably the Citizens' Action Committee campaign against the uprooting of people from their homes to new areas where there are frequently no facilities whatsoever, such as Limehill, or to new towns far away from their employment or opportunities for the future. One of the worst aspects of these removals is the fact that the new communities have no hope of a viable existence even in the future. Work opportunities just don't exist and the men have to go miles away as contract workers leaving a population of old people, women and children behind. The women are often

unable to supplement the family income because there is no form of daily labour nearby *and women are not allowed to enter most prescribed areas as contract workers.* Many of the new settlements are villages or towns and the people are not allowed to keep cattle or other livestock. These removals and the Group area removals of Coloured and Indian people are going on all over the country, and when the sympathy of the nation had been aroused by the misery at Limehill the Citizens' Action Committee (which was started and inspired by the Black Sash and is under the chairmanship of Jean Sinclair) decided to try to have a petition signed by as many people as possible presented to the State President. The campaign was accompanied by photographic leaflets and information sent out to all the newspapers, demonstrations, a vigil and as much publicity as possible. I have gone into this fairly thoroughly because, although you all took part and full reports were made to regional and national conference, reactions to this campaign are still being noted. There have been many questions asked in parliament on removals and the no-confidence debate was marked by many statistics and figures and much interest which, I think we can claim, would not have been so complete if the interest of the country had not been aroused. Only the other day the campaign was mentioned as "that successful campaign" in a programme on the S.A.B.C. It was then criticised on the grounds that we did not give the full facts but it is at least something to have such a source grant us success. We must continue to ventilate this whole question as and when the opportunity presents itself. We, as headquarters region have received some horrifying and interesting reports from other regions on resettlement camps and these have brought another difficulty in their wake. As you know permits must be sought to enter African areas and these have been refused in the Transvaal. If permits are obtained and a visit made under the auspices and guidance of the officials in the areas concerned a condition is made by them that publicity will not be given to the conditions. This means that reports obtained in this way can have no issue except in that they add to our own private *information.*

FAMILY DAY:

Last year our family day protest was tied up with the whole question of removals. We produced a pamphlet for distribution, pointing

out the evils of migratory labour and the extent to which this system is being perpetuated and entrenched by the government. This year we have already made our plans for this day. We feel it is most important that we should continue to protest on this holiday every year because the damage being done to the whole social and family life of the African people becomes worse every year and we see so many of the results in Johannesburg. The Churches are showing some concern and this is an area where we might expect ordinary white families to be moved by the plight of others. We are at the moment producing a very punchy pamphlet, very brief which we plan to distribute through the post to 5,000 people. We intend to have a demonstration on the Friday evening before the holiday and we hope that all our members will try to help by writing individual letters to the press on aspects of family life and migratory labour in South Africa. If enough people write it is possible to get some attention. The letters can be very brief and I do ask you all to make a point of doing this. We would also be glad of some volunteers to address envelopes and make themselves responsible for posting a pile of the pamphlets.

OTHER DEMONSTRATIONS:

During the past year we have demonstrated on the anniversary of the Limehill removals by having an all day vigil outside the Cathedral while a vigil of prayer was held inside. We had a series of three demonstrations against the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill, which we are pleased to see is probably being postponed until next year; we also had a demonstration on the occasion of the opening of parliament, and one calling for Academic Freedom. Other means of expressing our protest have been in the form of letters and articles in the press; we tried to get Dr. Jacobs to call a public meeting to inform Johannesburg about the implications of the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill and we wrote a letter to the Minister of Bantu Administration telling him why we thought the Bill is unacceptable. We sent a copy of this letter to all cabinet ministers and to some U.P. members of parliament, and to the press. We asked the Mayor to call a meeting of citizens of Johannesburg to explain the implications of the Community Development Amendment Bill. He refused to do so. This bill and the Bantu Boards bill will seriously damage the system of local government and the whole structure

of democratic government. The autonomy of local authorities will be severely restricted. All these bills demonstrate how impotent we are in a cause where the public has forgotten the principles and has no wish to be reminded. We feel we cannot do more than register our strong protest.

OTHER CAUSES FOR CONCERN:

What I have just said also applies to issues such as the South West Africa bill, the Population Registration Bill, the University Bills which call the tribal colleges universities while according them none of the normal university autonomy, the Bantu Homelands citizenship bill, African taxation, doctor's salaries, pass raids, mass arrests, punishment without trial, the death of three men in a police van and ministerial powers. We have made our protest on each of these issues but can hope no more than that we have expressed our own personal dissent with no thought as to any change coming about because of our actions.

There have been so many dreadful bills, regulations and arbitrary government actions that we have been overwhelmed by a feeling of frustration.

BRANCHES:

The Waverley Branch has gone on doing magnificent work especially with their fund raising both for the regional funds and for the family of a banished man which they have been helping to support for some years. Mrs. Stucken and Mrs. Driver have worked very hard to keep this branch going and we owe them a debt of gratitude.

The Rustenburg Branch, as has been the case for a couple of years, has been unable to do much active work because most of their members are working women. The committee is planning a visit to them later in the year to keep them in touch.

The Bryanston branch has rather folded up since their two active members had to stop active participation. Mr. Humphreys has taken a full time job and Mrs. Hatswell has gone back to live in England. These two did an enormous amount of work and they are much missed.

The Witbank Branch, after struggling along very successfully in an unsympathetic environment for all these years has now decided that they cannot continue to function as a branch any longer. They, as individuals are remaining members of the Black Sash and will do what they can in Witbank. They

have promised us some information on new towns and conditions nearby and we will keep in touch with them by visiting during the year, and we hope that some of them may be able to attend our general meetings from time to time.

SPEAKERS:

Members have been asked to speak on the passlaws on various occasions. Some have been very successful occasions others have been somewhat disappointing in that not many people have turned out. We feel that this is well worth doing because there is always a possibility that someone will be inspired to act on the information put before them.

SATURDAY CLUB:

This club has continued to function well but when Mrs. Carlson went on leave it had to go into recess. We hope meetings will be resumed now. This illustrates the enormous difficulty we have getting people to do the necessary work. I am afraid that many of our activities become dependent on one person and we have not found any pressure from the membership to become actively involved if it means any regular commitment of their time.

The Black Sash cannot go on indefinitely without constant infusion of new ideas and new methods. There is so much to be done and we feel confident of the pressing need that the voice of dissent should continue to be heard. It is easy to see, on looking around, how quickly people forget what is right and just and however little we can achieve it can at least never be said that we did not care.

LIMEHILL REPORT

Compiled by the Natal Coastal Region of the Black Sash

THE SEWING CLUB in the Limehill area of Northern Natal was opened at the end of 1968.

It has grown into the size of a factory — yet it is not a factory. There are about 250 women at work, under one supervisor, who is illiterate. Her dusty, worn shoes tell of long tramps along winding footpaths, up rocky hills and across muddy dongas.

Battered cardboard cartons carry the “factory” goods to and fro. They get squashed between chicken crates and milk cans, and end up swaying comfortably on the head of the supervisor.

A factory would be much easier to organise. There would be four walls sheltering the workers, who would be paid monthly at a flat rate. Instead the workers are scattered over many miles, sewing earnestly on rickety tables or the floors of their mud and thatch huts. Each woman gets paid individually for the work she does — each garment she makes has a different value. It creates a book-keeping headache which would deter any business-man from being involved in the venture. However this is not a business enterprise. It is a home industry in the African areas of Natal where distances are vast, transport erratic, and the people desperately poor. These are people with incomes below the bread-line, so that

“industries” such as bakeries and laundries would be out of place.

These are people who may be too old or too sick or not clever enough to qualify for work in the towns. The people know that they are ignorant and therefore vulnerable, and so try to protect themselves with a stubborn suspicion of anything new. At first the Sewing Club met with little response in one area because the African women thought the Supervisor was peddling stolen goods. It took the appearance of a European to convince them that all was genuine.

The Sewing Club began with donations of scraps of material from all over Natal and these were handed out to some African women. The idea soon caught on, and there was a rush to join the Club which soon had to close its membership for lack of supervision. An African Organiser was employed to visit the different parts of the Limehill area distributing free scraps, as well as materials which cost the worker about 20c. a yard. Another woman is also employed to sort the scraps of material according to size. Some Sewing machines were bought with a donation, and they travel the area like everything else — on the heads of the women.

The Club is going so well that it is difficult to keep up with the demand for membership. Recently, 6 of the better seam-