

refused to receive a deputation, and sent a discourteous reply through his private secretary, brushing aside these two well-known women's organizations as "leftist", and implying that they had no regard for the safety of the State.

Undeterred, the Black Sash and the National Council of Women went ahead with plans for a campaign in 1964 to have the clause repealed when it came before Parliament for review at the end of May. They supported Mr. Hamilton Russell in his campaign, and organized well-attended meetings in all the larger centres which were addressed by Mr. Russell in memorable and hard-hitting speeches. The Churches were drawn into the campaign, and they took the lead in calling public meetings all over the country, which were addressed by leading churchmen of the various denominations, all urging repeal of this obnoxious measure.

Yet in spite of all these protests, and in spite of pressure by the Opposition when the clause came up for review at the end of the 1964 session of Parliament, the 90-day detention clause was renewed for another twelve months.

In view of the Government's claim, after the Rivonia trials, that all underground activities had been scotched, it had been hoped that the clause would be considered no longer necessary. But the Minister of Justice asked for its renewal, hinting, however, that it might be possible to repeal it within a short time.

Yet hardly had the session ended before there was a further wave of arrests under this clause in

the Transvaal and the Cape, together with a series of dawn raids upon the homes of hundreds of people, including numbers of distinguished citizens, well-known anti-Communists whose respectability and regard for the law could not be questioned. The arrests and raids continue, and nobody knows when they will end.

There have been further outbreaks of sabotage, including the recent bomb outrage at the Johannesburg station. The Black Sash has always condemned violence and sabotage, and believes that those who perpetrate these crimes must be brought to justice. Nevertheless, it does not believe that arbitrary 90-day detention, which is outside the rule of law, is defensible. The public cannot know whether there is evidence of subversive activity against all those detained, or whether the Government is using its powers to silence those who openly and legally oppose its policies. Only when individuals are charged and brought to trial in open court can the full facts become known, and justice be seen to be done.

The Bantu Laws Amendment Bill

Early in 1963, the Minister of Information held a special Press conference to give advance publicity to a Bill drawn up by the Bantu Administration Department. Mr. Waring had not yet read the Bill, but he represented it as a measure designed primarily to promote healthy race relations, to eliminate obsolete and overlapping provisions of existing Bantu legislation, and to ease the lot of the African worker. When the



The Transvaal Region of the Black Sash begins a 48-hour vigil against the implementation of the General Law Amendment ("No-trial") Act.

draft Bill was published a few days later, its provisions were found to be harsher and more oppressive than ever, while it gave the Government drastic and far-reaching powers to control all African labour.

Comments upon the Bill prior to its revision by the Cabinet were called for by the Department, and many organizations and individuals availed themselves of this invitation, mainly attacking the Bill on the grounds of its inhumanity, its interference with labour and with the powers of local authorities, and the hardship and inconvenience it would cause both Black and White citizens.

Deeply disturbed about the implications of the proposed legislation, the underlying purpose of which was to establish the Africans permanently as a migrant labour force with no rights of residence in the "White" areas, Black Sash women all over the country spent endless hours studying the draft Bill and the slightly modified version which was later placed before Parliament. Two memoranda on the draft Bill were submitted, one from National Headquarters and one from Cape Western Region, attacking the Bill mainly on the grounds that it would lead to a further breakdown in the already unsettled family life of the Africans; remove the small measure of security hitherto enjoyed by them in the urban areas, creating an insecure and rootless people; interfere with the free movement of labour, and increase racial friction while causing economic uncertainty.

Large-scale demonstrations were planned in every Region to coincide with the second reading debate, posters were prepared, informative pamphlets were printed. Not since the days of the protests against the Senate Act had so much endeavour been concentrated upon a single measure.

In the meantime Black Sash Headquarters sent a telegram to the Prime Minister, asking him for an interview so that their objections to the Bill might be explained and amplified. He referred them to Mr. de Wet Nel, Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, who replied asking the Black Sash for a Memorandum setting out the basis of their objections. At short notice, therefore, a third Memorandum was drawn up by Headquarters with the collaboration of Cape Western Region, and sent to the Minister.

Shortly afterwards, however, the Government decided not to proceed with the full 143 clauses of the Bill during the 1963 session, and an abridged Bill of 33 clauses, which omitted many of the provisions which gave the greatest concern, was placed before Parliament and duly enacted.

The Black Sash received a letter from Mr. de Wet Nel saying that the discussion with the Black Sash could take place "at a later date".

Many people, including members of the Black Sash, regarded the withdrawal of the major and most contentious parts of the Bill as a hopeful

sign that the Minister was at least prepared to consider objections to its provisions. A Black Sash deputation was in due course accorded an interview with the Minister and his advisers, and given an opportunity of expressing Black Sash views and presenting concrete evidence of individual cases of hardship, gleaned from the records of the Athlone Advice Office. They were listened to with courteous and careful attention, congratulated on their thorough study and understanding of the legislation, and the Minister expressed shock at some of the case histories related, asking that in future individual cases of hardship be referred to him personally. (This has since been done in many instances.) They left the interview with high hopes that their representations would have the effect of ameliorating future legislation.

But it was not to be. The Bill that was introduced in Parliament during the 1964 session was substantially the same as the original Bill. The Black Sash protested, and many other protests and objections were made inside and outside Parliament, but little attention was paid to all these protests, and the Bill was passed with only minor amendments.

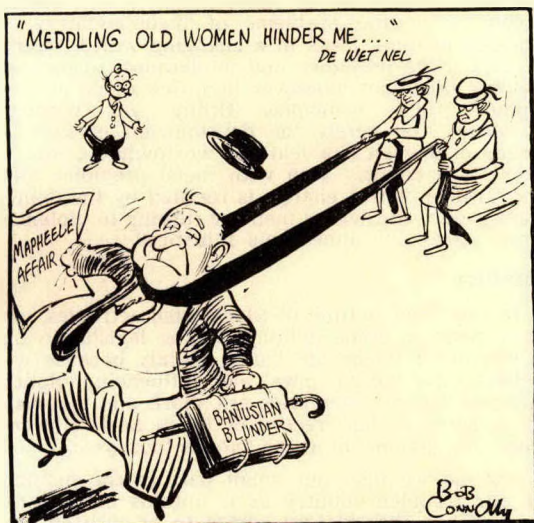
This legislation is obviously an essential part of the Government's whole apartheid policy, the complement of the Bantustan "independence" plan. As the "Rand Daily Mail" pointed out at the time of the publication of the draft Bill, the measure gives the Minister 'complete control over the movement, residence and occupation of every African living outside his "homeland" . . . it is a *quid pro quo*, a strict bargain. Limited self-rule in the Bantustans, and, in return, nothing at all in the White areas.'

It was recently pointed out to the Black Sash that one of the provisions of the Bill, which enables officials to send "idle" Africans to camps where they can be offered "suitable" employment which they are more or less obliged to accept, is in effect a legalization of that old enemy of the Black Sash, the "induced" farm labour system.

"Meddling old women"

Like many other responsible citizens and organizations in South Africa the Black Sash has for many years been deeply concerned about the effects on the African of the group of laws known as the "Pass Laws", which bear only on the African, and are generally acknowledged to be one of the main causes of racial friction in the country. From time to time, the Black Sash has made representations against these laws to responsible authorities, and these have, in the main, been courteously received.

At the time of the publication of the draft Bantu Laws Amendment Bill, feeling that the ever-increasing severity of these laws and their implementation constituted a serious danger to race relations in South Africa, the Black Sash decided to make a further appeal to the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development to relax the



Black Sashed.

(Rand Daily Mail)

existing laws and reconsider the proposed legislation.

Accordingly, a well-considered letter was addressed to him, pointing out the evil effects of these laws from every point of view. The letter was dismissed in a curt reply from the Minister's Private Secretary, accusing the Black Sash of "meddling" in a matter of which it knew nothing.

Some time later, when the Minister was being questioned in Parliament about his decision in the Mapheele case, he complained that he was being hindered in his work by "meddling old women", referring to the Black Sash Advice Office workers. He repeated his complaint on a second occasion, and even accused the Black Sash of unlawful and immoral practices, suggesting that it might be "furthering the aims of Poqo". These charges were refuted by the Black Sash in a letter to the Press, and have not since been repeated.

The Black Sash opens its ranks

When the Black Sash first came into existence in a spontaneous explosion of moral indignation caused by the Senate Act, that political manoeuvre which removed rights from South Africans of colour to the advantage of the Whites, it seemed reasonable and proper to most members that the Black Sash should be an organization of women voters, and therefore White women. They saw themselves as the conscience of the White electorate whom they held primarily responsible for the state of affairs which had been allowed to develop in South Africa.

In the years that have followed, the Black Sash has continuously campaigned for justice for all South Africans. In the course of this work members have learned that the basic injustice in our

country is the policy of discrimination on grounds of colour; and that while the rest of the world is rejecting racial and colour discrimination more and more, South Africa alone is intensifying it and perpetuating it by law.

With their own categorical rejection of the principle or racial discrimination came the question as to whether they could remain a body of voters, an organization of White women, since the franchise in South Africa is restricted to Whites. There was a decided division of opinion on this point.

The members of the Black Sash had come to realize that a happy and peaceful future for their country depended upon a broad concept of South African nationhood embracing all its peoples; and many of them felt that the Black Sash should give expression to this concept by opening its ranks to all South African women. They felt, too, that since all legitimate avenues of protest had been closed, one by one, to non-Whites, non-White women should be given an opportunity of sharing in the peaceful and legitimate activities of the Black Sash.

Yet there were many other members, who, while they fully subscribed to the Black Sash rejection of colour discrimination, still sincerely believed that they would have a better chance of righting wrongs brought about by the arbitrarily enfranchised Whites if they remained the "conscience" of the White electorate, a **voice of protest from within**. They felt that as a group of privileged White women obviously seeking no material advantage for themselves in their work for justice, the Black Sash would have greater strength than as a mixed group in which many women would be fighting to establish their own rights.

And after nearly four years of discussion and soul-searching, the issue was decided in October, 1963, at the Annual National Conference. By a majority of more than two-thirds, the Black Sash decided to open its ranks to all women of the Republic of South Africa.

Spirit of protest

In response to the many inquiries we are constantly receiving about the origin of our organization and the reasons for its continued existence, we offer this brief outline of the history of the Black Sash. It is of necessity brief, and many aspects of our work have been merely touched upon, or omitted entirely. But it will, we hope, give some indication of the present scope of our activities and objectives, and at the same time provide an answer to those people who think that the only activities of the Black Sash lie in its now somewhat sporadic public demonstrations.

These public appearances are now only a part — yet still an important part — of our work. It is a long time since we expected our Black Sash demonstrations, no matter how well-timed, how emphatic, or how long sustained, to have any real

effect upon the unjust legislation against which we protest; but they do provide a visual reminder to the public of the need for constant protest, and visible evidence that the spirit of protest is still alive in our country.

Achievement

And what has the Black Sash achieved? It is true that, in practical terms, we can claim no spectacular success, and much of our hard work over the years seems to have come to nothing. However, we can and do claim material success in at least two instances — our protests against the iniquitous induced farm labour scheme in the Transvaal a few years ago led to the abandonment of the scheme; and the small successes of the Black Sash Advice Offices, particularly the Athlone Advice Office, have brought comfort to some of our less fortunate fellow citizens. If the Black Sash has achieved nothing else, this help to the helpless, little though it may be when measured against the appalling defencelessness of the Africans in general, more than justifies its existence.

But something else has been achieved. It is a remarkable fact that many of the women who started out with the Black Sash more than nine years ago are still as active and as enthusiastic as ever. These women have grown and developed with the Black Sash, and have learned many

valuable lessons — to think honestly and objectively about the problems of their country, to accept changing ideas in a changing world, to try to cast aside prejudice and intolerance, to protest against injustices wherever they find them, and to uphold their principles firmly yet without violence. And surely the development of such a group of women is a real and worthwhile achievement in a country torn with racial prejudice and intolerance, where change is resisted by the dominant group, and where men are turning to violence under stress of unbearable injustice?

History

In this brief outline of Black Sash activities, we have dealt in some detail with the legislation on which our protests are based, mainly because we believe that these laws are influencing South Africa's destiny. Memories are short, and we wish to preserve a clear record of Black Sash motivation and actions in these momentous years.

And so we play our small part in the history of our troubled country as it unfolds before our eyes. When that history comes to be written, no matter how little we women of the Black Sash may be found to have influenced the course of events, perhaps it may be remembered that all our work and protests were based solely on moral issues, and, in the words of our Dedication, "**History and our children will defend us.**"



The last demonstration on the Johannesburg City Hall steps.

**FAMILY DAY
IN A COUNTRY THAT DISRUPTS
FAMILIES**

The Black Sash has for many years been deeply concerned about the break-up of African families caused by apartheid legislation.

The picture on the right shows part of a demonstration on July 13th, "Family Day", an annual public holiday in South Africa dedicated to the promotion of happy family relationships.

In the picture below, Cape Town members demonstrate against the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill of 1964.



Dedication . . .

IN pride and humbleness we declare our devotion to the land of South Africa, we dedicate ourselves to the service of our country. We pledge ourselves to uphold the ideals of mutual trust and forbearance, of sanctity of word, of courage for the future, and of peace and justice for all persons and peoples. We pledge ourselves to resist any diminishment of these, confident that this duty is required of us, and that history and our children will defend us.

So help us God, in Whose strength we trust.

Toewydingsrede . . .

MET trots en nederigheid verklaar ons ons gehegtheid aan die land van Suid-Afrika, ons wy ons aan die diens van ons land. Ons belowe plegtig die ideale te handhaaf van onderlinge vertroue en verdraagsaamheid, van die onskendbaarheid van beloftes, van moed vir die toekoms, van vrede en regverdigheid teenoor alle persone en rasse. Ons beloof plegtig om ons te verset teen enige vermindering hiervan, oortuig dat hierdie plig ons opgelê is en dat die geskiedenis en ons kinders ons sal regverdig.

Mag God ons help, op Wie se krag ons ons verlaat.

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