

THE BLACK SASH.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

HELD ON

FEBRUARY 15TH, 16TH, 17TH and 18TH, 1971.

IN

CAPE TOWN.

DELEGATES ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE :

HEADQUARTERS.

|                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| National President       | Mrs. Jean Sinclair   |
| National Vice Presidents | Mrs. Joyce Harris    |
|                          | Mrs. Anna Marais     |
| National Secretary       | Mrs. R. M. Johnston  |
| National Treasurer       | Mrs. B. Beinashowitz |
| Magazine Editor          | Mrs. Sheena Duncan   |

CAPE WESTERN REGION.

Mrs. Robb, Mrs. Wilks, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Stott,  
Miss. Price, Mrs. Dichmont, Miss Grant/Mrs. Hacking.

CAPE EASTERN REGION.

Mrs. St. Ledger, Miss. Hardiman.

BORDER REGION.

Mrs. Streek.

NATAL COASTAL REGION.

Mrs. Patrick, Mrs. Matthews.

NATAL MIDLANDS REGION.

Mrs. Dyer, Mrs. Phillips, Mrs. Park-Ross.

TRANSVAAL REGION.

Mrs. Carlson, Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Mendelsohn, Mrs. Mason,  
Mrs. M. Sinclair.

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Conference opened on Monday 15th February, 1971 at 8 p.m with  
a public meeting addressed by the NATIONAL PRESIDENT, MRS. JEAN SINCLAIR,  
who spoke on "OUTWARD BOUNTY AND INWARD BAASKAP", and Professor Jonathan SUZM  
who spoke on "PROTEST".

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TUESDAY 16TH FEBRUARY, 1971.

THE DEDICATION WAS READ.

Mrs. Noel Robb, Chairman, Cape Western Region welcomed all Delegates.

Mrs. Sinclair thanked Cape Western for all their wonderful organisation and for the flowers which were awaiting delegates.

APOLOGIES : Mrs. Roberts, Cape Western, is ill and sent her apologies for non-attendance. She also sent her very best wishes for a successful conference. Mrs. Cobbett, Transvaal Region, is ill.

THE RULES OF PROCEDURE WERE ADOPTED.

THE PRESS COMMITTEE was elected, viz :

Convener - Mrs. Wilks, Cape Western Region.  
Mrs. Harris, Headquarters and Transvaal Region.  
Mrs. St. Leger, Cape Eastern Region.  
Mrs. Streek, Border Region.  
Mrs. Matthews, Natal Coastal Region.  
Mrs. Dyer, Natal Midlands Region.

Mrs. Carlson to stand in if necessary.

THE MINUTES OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE, 1969, WERE CONFIRMED AND SIGNED.

THE AGENDA was discussed and it was agreed to hold open sessions when the press could be present. These sessions will be from 2-4 p.m on Tuesday and Wednesday.

REGIONAL REPORTS.

NATAL MIDLANDS REGION. - Mrs. Dyer reporting.

The Region has been active in finding out details of Performing Arts Council entertainments with regard to performances for non-whites. Swartkops location has had some publicity in the press. It appears that there is some possibility that the Indian people in Newcastle who have already been moved and who have built schools, houses, mosques, etc., will be moved again. Agreed that a question should be asked in Parliament about this.

Arising out of the Report :-

Mrs. Stott said that some Coloured people have been moved twice and that Coloured Housing schemes in Cape Town have been declared "white".

Mrs. Carlson congratulated the Region on their multi-racial activities.

Mrs. Stott spoke on school bursaries for Africans and B.A.D. regulations about them.

CAPE WESTERN REGION - Mrs. Robb reporting.

The Region has All-branch meetings every month. Headquarters Region was congratulated on the "H for Homelands" Pamphlet. A plaque is to be put up on a church in Buitenkant Street to commemorate the Coloured people removed from the area. They had five demonstrations in the year, not four.

NATAL COASTAL REGION - Mrs. Patrick reporting.

The Region's main concern is the Advice Office. There is no steady flow of cases. Some publicity for it has appeared in the press. Headquarters was congratulated on the "H" for Homelands" and "Who Cares?" pamphlets. Members of the Region stood for ten weeks on the detention of the "22". They held a stand on the day the Dean of Johannesburg was charged and some Church people stood with them.

Arising out of the Report/—

Arising out of the Report :

Natal Coastal were advised to ask for legal opinion on the matter of stands etc.

TRANSVAAL REGION - Mrs. Carlson reporting.

The Conference congratulated Transvaal on its sustained stands over the "22".

BORDER REGION - Mrs. Streek reporting.

The Region has a successful multi-racial group which meets regularly.

There are a number of young housewives in East London (not members) who are protesting against discrimination.

CAPE EASTERN - Mrs. St. Leger reporting for Grahamstown.

Grahamstown Branch are very concerned about the removal of the Fingoe People in their area and are campaigning to have this stopped. The City Council are also to fight it, after persuasion. A leaflet has been drawn up and signatures sought for a petition.

The branch was congratulated on its fine work.

Arising out of the report :-

Condolences were sent to the Branch on the tragic death of Mrs. Val Pulley.

RESOLUTION

"That as from 1st April, 1971, Cape Eastern Region be divided into two autonomous regions, to be known as Cape Eastern and Albany Regions respectively".

Proposed Mrs. St. Leger.  
Seconded Mrs. Streek.

In explanation, Mrs. St. Leger said that communication was difficult and that Grahamstown was a different type of community to Port Elizabeth. Grahamstown would administer Alexandria, Cowie and Bedford.

The Resolution was passed - 25 For and 1 Abstention.

Mrs. Sinclair welcomed the new Region.

HEADQUARTERS REPORT - Mrs. Joyce Harris reporting.

Since the report was written they have been approached for a Statement on the birthday of Drum Magazine and by NUSAS re Republic Day. Headquarters congratulated all regions on their continuing, valuable activities.

Arising out of the Report :-

It was suggested that Headquarters arrange for a poll of their mailing list - 80 questionnaires represent 5,000 people.

It was also suggested that the voters' roll be used for mailing lists, that pamphlets be sent to ordinary people and drawn up for them.

It was requested that pamphlets should also be printed in Afrikaans.

It was agreed that the National President should visit all Regions between Conferences and Cape Western Region will pay the Air Fares for the coming year.

THE REPORT WAS ADOPTED - Proposed Mrs. Robb.  
Seconded Mrs. Dyer.

MAGAZINE EDITOR'S REPORT /—

Mrs. Duncan reporting/

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MAGAZINE EDITOR'S REPORT - Mrs. Duncan reporting.

Mrs. Duncan asked all Regions to please send her material, particularly speeches at meetings where they have interesting speakers.

The Editor was congratulated by Conference on the excellence of the magazine.

THE REPORT WAS ADOPTED - Proposed Miss. Price.  
Seconded Mrs. Mason.

TREASURER'S REPORT - Mrs. Beinashowitz reporting.

There was discussion on methods of raising extra money for Headquarters, and Cape Western made a generous offer of a donation of R400.00 so that levies need not be increased in the coming year.

THE REPORT WAS ADOPTED - SUBJECT TO THE DELETION OF THE LAST SENTENCE WHICH ADVOCATED THAT LEVIES BE INCREASED.

Proposed Mrs. Stott.  
Seconded Mrs. Dyer.

GENERAL.

Mrs. Stott spoke on the Nico Malan theatre controversy and the removal of the non-white voters from the municipal voters' roll. A statement on the latter will be issued by Conference.

ADVICE OFFICE REPORTS - Mrs. Duncan reporting for Johannesburg  
Mrs. Robb do Athlone  
Mrs. Patrick do Durban

There was discussion on the reports and the particular types of cases dealt with in the offices.

Mrs. Versfeld - Athlone Office - told Conference that qualified people living in self-made shacks in Stellenbosch, where they paid R1.60 per month for the site rent are being removed. The shacks are being demolished and no further housing is being provided for them. There are 60 brick-built houses only in the area and qualified families are being told they will have to seek lodgings.

RESETTLEMENT TOWN :

Mrs. Herbstein, Cape Western Region, gave a talk on DIMBAZA, based on an article, which she had written, which appeared in the Cape Times in July, 1970. This gave rise to discussion (precis below) on what should be done.

Mrs. Streek gave some facts and figures on the East London area.

Mrs. Carlson These conditions should be publicised until people in South Africa cannot say "I did not know" as they did in the case of Dachau and Auschwitz.

Mrs. Wilks reminded Conference of a resolution passed at National Conference 1969 asking that we press for a Commission of Enquiry into conditions in Resettlement Areas. She said that pictures must appear in the National press.

Mrs. Dichmont formally proposed that the Black Sash ask for a Commission of Enquiry.

Mrs. Duncan gave details from the press of two recent removals in the Transvaal.

Mrs. Phillips suggested that we hammer the Members of Parliament in the areas concerned.

Miss. Price urged that letters in Afrikaans be sent to the Afrikaans press.

Mrs. Stott and Mrs. Robb suggested that a Market Research survey be instigated.

IT WAS RESOLVED/—

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT Cape Western Region investigate the possibility of a Market Research Survey and that if feasible, Cape Western initiate the survey and raise the money.

Mrs. Patrick urged that the removal and hardships of all races be tackled in any campaign because Indians and Coloured people were also suffering.

Mrs. Carlson said that we should not measure degrees of suffering and all Regions should tackle the publicising of resettlement irrespective of who was involved. She said there were many ways of bringing this to the notice of all levels of the population, e.g.,  
The Churches could have a "Roll of Shame" prominently displayed with a list of Resettlement Areas - and that all clergymen should refer to this at least once every Sunday.

The S. A. Foundation could have photographs sent to them of these villages and asked why they are not included in the tours organised for visiting VIP'S.

Big firms could be contacted - ask the breweries, for instance, when sending them photographs "How much beer do you reckon you can sell to these people".

#### GENERAL

Mrs. Sinclair thanked Mrs. Herbstein for her talk.

Rondebosch Branch of Cape Western Region was thanked for providing both morning and afternoon tea, both of which were excellent.

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#### WEDNESDAY 17TH FEBRUARY, 1971.

#### GENERAL

Mrs. Sinclair thanked Mrs. Robb and the Cape Western Region for a lovely party.

AGREED that Conference give a statement to the Press on last night's "current affairs" programme re expose' of white slum conditions and suggesting that they show equal concern over Resettlement areas.

#### CAMPAIGN ON AFRICAN WOMEN.

Mrs. Carlson gave a resumé of the campaign since its inception and presented the Charter. Mrs. Harris then introduced the Petition to be presented at the Bar of the House. Regions discussed both Petition and Charter and they are to be submitted more or less as drafted by Transvaal Region. It was agreed that the Petition be signed by delegates only, on behalf of the whole Black Sash, and that no outside people be involved. It will be presented either on Thursday 18th or Friday 19th February by Mrs. Helen Suzman.

The Charter will be sent for ratification to womens' organisations and used for publicity generally. Regions agreed to use the charter as and when they could. The suggestion that lapel buttons be used in the campaign was defeated (18 Against, 3 For and 2 Abstentions).

#### FACT PAPER - PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION.

This paper was presented by Mrs. Harding and Mrs. Malherbe of the Rondebosch Branch.

It was suggested that all Regions should compile this sort of information and insist on the responsibility of the authorities in providing proper facilities. Both speakers and the Branch were congratulated on their magnificent research and wonderful papers, by Mrs. Sinclair.

GENERAL / —

GENERAL.

Mrs. Sinclair thanked the False Bay branch for tea.

A letter was sent from Conference to Mrs. Forrest whose husband died and who has subsequently been in a car accident, conveying the deep sympathy of all delegates.

A telegram was sent to Mrs. Barbara Willis who is ill in hospital.

A message was conveyed from Mrs. Bobbie Cluver who sent best wishes for a successful conference.

NUSAS has asked for co-operation in their plans for Republic Day and it was agreed that representatives meet them and consider this matter.

RESOLUTION.

"That this Conference supports the resolution of the Civil Rights Conference of October 3rd. 1970, concerning conscientious objectors to military service".

Proposed Mrs. St. Leger.  
Seconded Mrs. Mendelsohn.

Passed 21 For, 2 Against, 2 Abstentions.

FACT PAPER - PENSIONS.

This paper was presented by Mrs. Truswell, Cape Western Region. She was congratulated on a wonderful paper, full of facts and figures which are invaluable. It was decided that it should be published by the Black Sash.

Mrs. Carlson suggested a novel form of pamphlet to underline the paucity of African Old Age Pensions. Transvaal will draft this and Regions will distribute it.

PROFESSOR HANSI POLLAK THEN ADDRESSED THE CONFERENCE ON THE FINDINGS OF A CONFERENCE ON COLOURED EDUCATION

There was lively discussion and questions and Mrs. Streek thanked the speaker on behalf of Conference.

FACT PAPER - INDIAN PROBLEMS IN NATAL.

Mrs. Matthews, Natal Coastal Region, presented this paper which was in three sections covering Wyebank, Stockville and the Grey Street area.

Suggestions made were that representatives of the Region appear at all Group Areas hearings and give evidence; that the Clause in the Censorship Act be included in literature and evidence re "ill-will between races"; that a statement be made from Conference.

Mrs. Sinclair thanked Natal Coastal for a comprehensive paper.

MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF CONFERENCE, 1968.

Mrs. Stott agreed to write a letter to all opposition Members of Parliament on maintenance grants for African Women.

DATE OF NEXT CONFERENCE.

In discussion on the possibility of changing the financial year - it was agreed that Conference revert to October and that the next conference be held on 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th October, 1972. To bridge the gap it was decided that a meeting of Regional Chairmen be held in October 1971. (19 For, 2 Against).

Because of the change of date, it was agreed that the financial year remain unchanged.

WEDNESDAY 18TH FEBRUARY, 1971.

ACTIVATING THE MEMBERSHIP.

This discussion was introduced by Mrs. Patrick, Natal Coastal Region, who read a paper written by Mrs. Wendy Jackson and endorsed by Mrs. Mary Grico. then read another paper, which differed in opinion from the first, by Mrs. Ann Colvin and endorsed by Mrs. Patrick.

Mrs. Robb - Some of our branches are keen to combat apathy by doing something constructive.

Mrs. Vinsen - There is lethargy in the branches and we suggest that a panel be made up of members who are prepared to take immediate action when circumstances arise. They will be guided by the Regional Executive. They will keep lists of influential people who should be contacted, write letters to the press, do research etc.

Mrs. Patrick - We always take action when we are aware of injustices, but have decided to instigate a survey on malnutrition and this will be done by our new members. We now have in the Region a Citizen's Communication Service which will co-ordinate the work done by various organisations and we shall use this service.

RECOMMENDATION.

That the Black Sash should, where possible, form Regional Action Panels to take immediate action in instances of injustice and discrimination resulting from legislation. The panel to be headed by a member of the Regional Council who will be responsible to the Regional Chairman.

Proposed Mrs. Robb  
Seconded Mrs. Wilks

The recommendation was accepted unanimously.

Mrs. Wilks - We have so many young people with so much talent that we must use them.

Mrs. Hacking - We must, however, continue with the work we have been doing in the past.

Mrs. Carlson - Transvaal Region will appoint conveners to contact and work with new and active members.

Mrs. Dyer - We have not the manpower to set up panels, and it would simply mean another task for the committee. We could and probably will, appoint a convener for immediate action.

Mrs. Streek - We shall try to do something like this in Border.

Mrs. St. Leger - In Grahamstown, the committee takes immediate action.

Mrs. Carlson - We have drawn up a list of ways in which new members can be involved, viz :-

1. Advice Office.
2. The Committee
3. Conveners to contact new members to find out their wishes and capabilities.
4. Visits to courts and hostels, etc., Take official tour to Soweto. Go and see Diagonal Street (where all Indians are to be moved)
5. Follow-up of families who have been moved.
6. Ensure that the committee delegates work.
7. Contact African women.
8. Take personal and immediate action in shops etc., where there is racial injustice.

Mrs. Dichmont/—

Mrs. Dichmont - Non-members could be called to a meeting in their own area, addressed by a good speaker. Any recruits could then be formed into informal groups to carry out projects.

Miss. Price - We have found that removals have involved many people. One of our projects is to take old age pensioners to collect their pensions and this has resulted in deep involvement.

"NATAL NATTERS" - (A house Magazine which is intended to activate members in the Natal Coastal Area, only one copy of which has been issued to date).

Mrs. Harris of Headquarters Region read a letter which had been sent to Natal Coastal with comments on the magazine.

Mrs. Robb said that an article appearing in the magazine under her name had never been intended to be printed and was not, in fact, written as a contribution but as a hasty letter putting some of her thoughts on paper.

Mrs. Wilks - We contact our members by a newsletter and we shall make copies of this available to all Regions. I feel that perhaps too much time and effort have gone into the house magazine.

Mrs. Moore - The magazine takes a paternalistic view in one article, and the juxtaposition of two articles, one on the removals from Geordedale and the other on the 15th birthday celebrations was unfortunate.

Mrs. Carlson - The layout and general idea is excellent but the content could be reconsidered.

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GENERAL. The Petition to the Bar of the House is to be presented and there must be no publicity before this is done. Later, Conference was advised that the petition had been presented.

Statement to Press - A statement was made on the removal of Indians in the Ladysmith and Newcastle areas, and others.

FACT PAPER - OUTLOOK IN ELGIN - presented by Mrs. Anne Brown.

The paper was discussed and it was suggested that attempts should be made to have the facts publicised, especially in journals which are read by farmers.

Mrs. Sinclair thanked Elgin for the paper and for the good work they are doing.

GENERAL.

Mrs. Sinclair thanked Claremont Branch for tea.

NUSAS PROTEST ON REPUBLICAN CELEBRATIONS.

Mrs. Robb reported on this and suggested a re-dedication of effort as was done ten years ago at a meeting of 3,000 people. She also suggested a special issue of the magazine. There was lively discussion on the contents of such a magazine, a possible title and the contributors. It was agreed that the matter be left in the hands of Headquarters, with all Regions trying to submit suitable articles.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION - When is Sash Welfare Work,"

This item was introduced by Mrs. Wilks.

Points from the presentation and discussion :-

1. It is illegal to ask the public for money for welfare work.
2. It is the duty of the Black Sash to find out where the need is and to alert other organisations and bodies to take action.
3. The Black Sash can only spend money on advice offices, publicity, transport etc.,

4. Opinion must be sought on use of Black Sash funds, already on hand, for donations to other organisations engaged in welfare work.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION - "Inter-Racial Contact".

This was introduced by Mrs. Dichmont, Cape Western Region, who spoke on the activities of a club to which she belongs. There was discussion.

ELECTION OF HEADQUARTERS REGION - Mrs. Streek in the Chair.

AND OFFICE-BEARERS.

Cape Western Region and Transvaal Region had been nominated prior to conference, but Cape Western Region withdrew.

TRANSVAAL REGION was then elected unanimously.

Mrs. Jean Sinclair - was elected National President with acclaim.

Proposed Mrs. Dyer.  
Seconded Miss. Price.

Mrs. Joyce Harris was elected a Vice President

Proposed Mrs. Mendelsohn  
Seconded Mrs. Carlson

Mrs. Anna Marais was elected a Vice President

Proposed Mrs. Patrick  
Seconded Mrs. Park - Ross.

VENUE FOR NEXT CONFERENCE. Johannesburg, October, 1972.

CHAIRMAN'S MEETING. A meeting of the Chairmen of all Regions and the Headquarters Executive will be held in East London in October, 1971.

BANTU AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION BILL.

Mrs. Robb gave the contents of the bill and there was discussion on the grounds of protest. It was agreed that the diminution of the powers of the local authorities and the consequent increase in the powers of the Government would be tackled. Cape Western agreed to contact Members of Parliament and Transvaal to write them.

It was stated that local authorities may be involved in the loss of a great deal of money if the Bill is passed and that they have opposed the Bill throughout.

BANTU RESETTLEMENT BILL.

All Regions will take action.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION - "The Road Ahead".

In view of the time factor, Mrs. Stott said that this could be left over. She pleaded, however, for the Black Sash to make its point of view more acceptable to the Africans, Coloureds and Asiatics.

SECTION 6 OF THE TERRORISM ACT.

New methods of protest against this Act were discussed and the following ideas given :-

1. An information board in a prominent place.
2. Use "Wayside Pulpits".
3. Rent large Billboard and advertise on buses.
4. Use placards on panel van.
5. Use placards on cars.
6. Two minutes silence at certain times of the day.
7. Prayer vigils in churches with pamphlets provided (Mrs Patrick said this was already being done in Churches in her area).

GENERAL.

Mrs. Dyer suggested that at future conferences, items be arranged on the Agenda on a time basis. This was seconded by all the observers. The difficulties were discussed and Headquarters agreed to attempt this.

Mrs. Sinclair thanked Cape Western for the wonderful organisation, the flowers, the transport and for providing the universal aunts who had been so very helpful. She also thanked Mrs. Johnston, Secretary, for her work in connection with Conference.

Mrs. Robb thanked the National President, Mrs. Sinclair, for her excellent chairmanship and for her fine speech at the opening of Conference.

Mrs. Johnston thanked Mrs. King for all her assistance during Conference.

Wynberg Branch were thanked for tea.

DATE.....SIGNATURE.....

MARCH, 1971./