

MINUTES OF BLACK SASH NATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD FROM 13-15 MARCH 1979 IN  
ST PAUL'S CHURCH HALL, RONDEBOSCH, CAPE PROVINCE.

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PRESENT. In the Chair, Joyce Harris - National President,  
Gita Dyzenhaus and Sheena Duncan - National Vice-Presidents:

Delegates as follows:

Natal Coastal: Solveig Piper, Ingrid Stewart, Jay Williams.

Cape Western: Mary Coke, Laurine Platsky, Noel Robb, Mary Burton,  
Joan Grover, Margaret Nash, Jane Prinsloo, Hilda Amato.

Albany: Marion Lacey. Natal Midlands: Bobby Cluver.

Transvaal: Sheila Lawrence, Netty Davidoff, Lesley Hermer,  
Ethel Walt, Mila Zille, Ruth Imrie, Pauline Berman.

Headquarters: Audrey Coleman for Magazine, Jill Wentzel, Secretary,  
Robin Harvey, Treasurer.

Observers as per attendance register.

1. The National President welcomed all delegates and observers.
2. The dedication was read by the National President.
3. Roll call of all those who died in detention had been read the previous evening at the public opening of conference. A minute's silence had been observed.
4. Mary Burton, Chairman of Cape Western Region, welcomed all delegates and made a few domestic announcements.
5. Apologies had been received from Bunty Biggs (Natal Midlands), Bobby Melunsky (Port Elizabeth), Trudy Thomas (Border), Jean Sinclair (National Life Vice-President). Telegrams and Greetings. A cable was sent to Jean Sinclair saying she was being missed and wishing her a good holiday. Greetings had been received from Esther Levitan, Barbara Waite and Bunty Biggs. A telegram was sent to Esther Levitan reading, "Thanks for your good wishes, we miss you," and another to Margaret Kirk reading, "National Conference sends its grateful thanks to you and all the staff for your hard and dedicated work."  
As a matter of urgency Natal Coastal asked that telegrams be sent to the editors of the Rand Daily Mail and Cape Times and to the Erasmus Commission. This was done and the following wording used:  
To the Rand Daily Mail and the Cape Times, "The Black Sash extends its warmest congratulations on your courage and determination to keep the public informed on the Department of Information issue."  
To the Erasmus Commission, "The National Conference of the Black Sash urges you not to withhold information from the public."
6. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS. The delegation to Dr Koornhof would meet to discuss its submissions after the day's sessions had ended around 5 p.m.
7. RULES OF PROCEDURE. Adopted.
8. ELECTION OF PRESS COMMITTEE. Following elected: Noel Robb and the Cape Western delegation to be the liaison. Ingrid Stewart and Noel Robb to word the telegrams.
9. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF NATIONAL CONFERENCES OF 1978.
  - A. National Conference held in March 1978 in Durban.
  - B. National Conference held in July 1978 in Johannesburg.Minutes of these two conferences had been circulated and as there were no corrections they were confirmed.
10. NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS REPORTS.
  - A. HEADQUARTERS REPORT. Presented by Joyce Harris. Appendix 1.

The National President was warmly congratulated on her year's work. In presenting the report, Joyce Harris expressed gratitude for support received from the headquarters committee and especially thanked Margaret Kirk for her tremendous contribution to the running of the office, which was endorsed with acclaim. Report adopted.
  - B. TREASURER'S REPORT. Presented by Robin Harvey. Appendix 2.

proposed that member's levy be increased from 50c to 60c per quarter. Report adopted. AGREED
  - C. MAGAZINE REPORT. Presented by Sheena Duncan for Janet Sahli (editor) Appendix 3.

In presenting this report Sheena Duncan commented that most of the magazine material came from Cape Western and Transvaal and asked other Regions to forward copies of talks and papers to the magazine. Noel Robb congratulated the editor on the high standard maintained, which conference endorsed with acclaim.

The Treasurer reported on magazine costs. Even though the printers had offered a price that represented a donation by them to the Black Sash, they had inadvertently raised their price and we were running at a loss, though the printers had offered to limit their price for the coming year. Cost of Magazine per issue was R740 for 25 pages, R948 for 36 pages and R843 for 32 pages for a printing of 2200 copies. Income from magazine was R2828, representing a loss over the year of R705. The Treasurer proposed that members should pay 60c per magazine and that non-members could be charged 80c-R1. She also proposed that Cape Western and Transvaal pay more for the complimentary copies at present costing 40c. There was much discussion on (i) how costs could be reduced - different printing methods etc: (ii) the type of magazine - whether it should remain an academic journal used by many people requiring facts - or should it be a communication tool? (iii) what was the target group? (iv) setting up a working group to look at our communications.

proposed that the cost to members should be increased to 60c.

Proposed M. Burton, seconded M. Zille.

AGREED

Proposed that each Region set up a committee to look into all aspects of the magazine and come to the next National Conference with proposals, a mock-up, likely costs etc. Proposed M. Burton, Seconded I. Stewart.

(21 For)

AGREED

further proposed that L. Platsky set up a meeting during conference but out of programme time with S&S Printers. The following regional representatives nominated for this: Bobby Cluver, Marion Lacey, Sheena Duncan, Ingrid Stewart, Laurine Platsky.

AGREED

that this sub-committee come back to Conference with definite proposals before a decision was taken on increasing the cost of the magazine.

(10-14)

LOST.

On the last day of conference L. Platsky reported on the meeting mentioned in the above resolution. She agreed to send details of figures quoted to headquarters for consideration.

S&S printers had said that if an advertising agency were engaged and advertising obtained it would be possible to print the magazine for as little as 20c a copy. Ms Platsky and her committee were thanked for this report, which would be given to the magazine editor for consideration. Magazine report adopted.

11. A. REGIONAL REPORTS.

ALBANY. Presented by Marion Lacey.

Appendix 4.

Ms Lacey reported that the success of the Mini-Congress held in February with members from Port Elizabeth and East London had caused members to revise their opinions re the effectiveness of Black Sash work. She mentioned the wonderful work done by Cathy Satchwell in organizing care of detainees.

Joyce Harris told the conference that the standard of papers given at the Mini-Congress had been very high and hoped these would be available or publication. She commented on Mercia Willsworth's paper on the Fingo Village where the residents showed great stamina and endurance in their struggle for survival. Bobby Melunsky had reported on Black Sash activity in Port Elizabeth - they had held stands, vigils, issued statements and were very involved in Walmer Village where 4,000 - 6,000 people were to be removed. J. Cock had spoken on the exploitation of domestic workers. Trudi Thomas had spoken movingly on the removals from Duncan Village. Report adopted.

CAPE WESTERN. Presented by Mary Burton.

Appendix 5.

Mary Burton reported on the campaign on the Price of Apartheid, the Fact Sheets produced and the ongoing interest shown. Members were attending meetings of the City and Divisional Councils and monitoring the courts. Prof van Rooyen had given a talk on Security Legislation in which he said the Criminal Procedure Act was preventing justice being done. Mary Burton said she had resigned as Chairman and Joan Grover had taken over. Laurine Platsky paid tribute to Mary's work, which Conference endorsed with acclamation. Report adopted.

NATAL COASTAL. Presented by Solveig Piper.

Appendix 6.

Solveig Piper mentioned particularly their analysis of members' skills and said the response to the questionnaire had been poor. The campaign on 30 years of Nationalist rule had not been good. The Housing campaign had been

very successful and the co-operation from other organizations good. There was a discussion on legal advice which had been taken in regions concerning the riotous assemblies act and the holding of demonstrations. Report adopted.

NATAL MIDLANDS. Bobby Cluver presented the report. Appendix 7.  
Nothing to add to the written report. Report adopted.

TRANSVAAL REPORT. Presented by Gita Dyzenhaus. Appendix 8.  
Gita reported a dearth of workers. The office had been thrown out of its premises once again and had not yet been able to find alternative accommodation. Workers were under great stress because of a dramatically increased case-load. Publicity had been good as far as statements and letters were concerned but photographs were not used in newspapers going to the white public. She paid tribute to the office staff.

PRETORIA BRANCH. Presented by Pauline Berman. Appendix 8a.  
Pauline said the Black Sash and the Advice office worked as two separate organizations. The Sash work was mostly centred round Winterveld. Report adopted.

MAP. Margaret Nash asked if the map had sold out and whether it was to be reprinted. Joyce Harris replied that it was now out of date due to consolidations and more removals. It was virtually sold out.

On the request of Margaret Nash conference noted that there might be a need for a revised version.

B. HUMAN RIGHTS IN LAW CONFERENCE, CAPE TOWN, JANUARY 1979. Appendix 9.

Noel Robb spoke to her report on this conference. She reported that a Continuation Committee had been formed. Joyce Harris mentioned that she had written to this committee requesting that the Black Sash be represented on the proposed Human Rights Commission.

Jill Wentzel reported on a paper omitted from Ms Robb's report: that delivered by Prof. James Read of the School of Oriental and African studies, University of London, in which he exploded the myth of a chaotic black Africa indifferent to human rights. She further commented on Sydney Kentridge's summing up.

Arising out of this conference, the Black Sash noted:

- (a) that we should lobby the universities and/or other organizations to organize a tour of SA by Prof Read:
- (b) we should bear in mind Sydney Kentridge's summing up in which he concluded that the consensus feeling at the human rights conference had been that a Bill of Rights should now be advocated as something which all South Africans desired as a wholesome basis for government: it should not now be neglected and left to reappear later in debased form as a last ditch stand by whites. Black Sash Black Sash to write press letters and promote discussion on the subject.
- (c) all Regions should obtain a copy of the published papers.

C. AND HOW WILL WE LIVE? (EQUALITY AND INEQUALITY) Appendix 10

Solveig Piper presented this paper, written by Shirley Moulder. There was discussion on Black Sash attitude to unreal white living standards which intensified alienation between black and white, and on the thesis that only when we are seen to be living differently from other whites will we be able to communicate with blacks.

Conference agreed with Mary Burton's summing up: that this paper had raised questions we should be asking ourselves: that we should be discussing this topic: but that was as far as we could go.

D. REPORT ON WORKSHOP ON THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONS IN PROMOTING AN OPEN SOCIETY.

Mary Burton reported. The Black Sash had taken part as one of the change-promoting organizations. Mary remarked on the positive feed-back from the blacks present, but, she pointed out, their presence there would indicate an attitude of relative acceptance. The following points arose out of the workshop:

- (i) a black man had requested that the Black Sash tell black people about the laws affecting them, if possible going into the townships to do so:
- (ii) it had been felt that the Black Sash should keep in touch with other groups working for change even if viewpoints differed:

- (iii) a valuable exercise might be to follow up a verbal agreement made with a state authority with a written interpretation stating one's intention to act on it, and then to do so if there were no contrary advice - in good faith.

12. POLITICS AND JUSTICE.

A. LIMITATION OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Appendix 11.

Intrid Stewart presented this paper, emphasising the difficulties the English language press were facing. Her suggestions for Black Sash in relations to the press were: that documents should be handed, not posted to news-editor: that the press should be telephoned before one-man stands: that we should apply for time on TV and if necessary complain to the Minister: that we should lobby those advertising in the Citizen and on TV: that as the Black Sash believes in free speech it should not censor what it gives to the press: that a copy of the speech made to the Human Rights conference by Prof Read be made available to the press.

The section of this paper quoting Mr Allan Savory on the press and broadcasting in Rhodesia was given special attention in the discussion following on this report.

B. POLICE BEHAVIOUR AND POLITICAL TRIALS.

Appendix 12.

This paper was presented by Ruth Imrie. A correction in the 6th line from the bottom on page 1 was noted. It should read, "one man was shot dead", and "trampled to death" should be crossed out. Correction on page 7, following on the date 16.11.78 should read "denied" and not described.

In presenting this report Ruth Imrie (i) drew attention to the number of times witnesses were held; (ii) said that police activity and action should be seen in the context of S.A. society. In the white community the police more or less still played its traditional role. On the other hand the police were the arbiters in the black man's life, a life ruled by endless laws. Prevailing attitudes in South Africa reinforced negative police behaviour. A reflection of these attitudes was seen in the lack of white insight into the Soweto disturbances; (iii) drew attention to low police pay: (iv) said that until the laws change nothing very much was going to happen.

Conference agreed that this research should be an on-going project, to be presented at Conference again next year. Ruth Imrie agreed to undertake it, and regions agreed to appoint representatives to collect all relevant information for Ruth.

Jill Wentzel drew attention to the fact that in a democracy one assumes the police to be good and therefore one is entitled to criticise them when they are not: therefore it was not necessary for the ongoing project to include instances of police behaving as they should.

Margaret Nash recommended that the paper be presented in booklet form with an introduction on the role of the police in western democratic society and should perhaps mention the role the police should be playing.

C. CRIMINAL LAWS AMENDMENT ACT.

Sheena Duncan reported that a group of lawyers were producing a breast pocket package consisting of a series of cards stating relevant information, for example: what to do if arrested. Race relations had received a grant to be used for keeping court records.

It was suggested that law societies be lobbied; all relevant information be disseminated, and, if possible, a memo be sent to the Human Rights Commission which had arisen out of the Human Rights In Law Conference.

D. THE NEW CONSTITUTION. This was discussed at the evening session on Tuesday

E. DISSENT AND PROTEST Resolution 1 on the agenda.

The revised wording was proposed, further amended, and accepted when put to the vote.

this conference believes that one of the prerequisites of democracy is free and frank political discussion. It notes that the voice of dissent and protest in South Africa is severely restricted by:

(a) prohibition of free assembly: (b) restrictions on newspapers: (c) National Party direction of the SABC and SATV; (d) intimidation which keeps many voices silent, and (e) a system of Christian National education which stifles all independent thought.

Democracy therefore cannot exist in South Africa, and this conference calls for the removal of restrictive legislation and the encouragement of open

discussion in order to make reconciliation and accommodation of political pressures possible. The Black Sash pledges itself to work towards this end.

AGREED

F. POLICE AND PRISONERS. resolution 4 on agenda.

Conference notes that people held by the police and security police are at the mercy of their gaolers: that cases of mistreatment of prisoners and detainees reaching the courts indicate a horrifying casualness and inhumanity.

Reasons of national security were often advanced as justification for the almost unlimited power of the police and security police.

Since neither national nor social justice could be served by unjust personal codes and practices, this conference calls for repeal of laws permitting detention without trial and without access to legal representation: the reduction of police power of arbitrary arrest and imprisonment,

the increase of measures and procedures designed to protect the human rights of all prisoners including their physical security, access to relatives and legal representatives and the opportunity to study: prompt and full investigation of all allegations of ill-treatment and torture of prisoners,

the prosecution and punishment of all government employees and agents involved in the mistreatment of prisoners.

AGREED

13. EDUCATION.

A. EDUCATION IN SOWETO.

Appendix 13.

In presenting this paper Netty Davidoff apologised for the lack of comparative figures between black and white teachers' salaries and pensions. She drew attention to the differences between white and black education and remarked that:

- (i) in Johannesburg some white schools adopted black schools with a consequent improvement in amenities for the black schools concerned:
- (ii) black teachers generally were anxious to be coached by their white counterparts:
- (iii) there was a demand for white teachers in black schools.

She felt that the Black Sash could ask for interviews with the regional directors of black education, could ask for tours, armed with prepared questions and that one should not necessarily be satisfied with the itinerary offered. One could work for the adoption of more black schools by white schools, could provide posters etc to brighten up class rooms and could pressurise education departments for better equipment and less austere conditions for pupils and staff.

In the discussion that followed this presentation some members felt that the Black Sash should work not for improvements but for the scrapping of black education; we should not lend respectability to cosmetic change.

Others felt that on the one hand the Black Sash should work for this at the time of the Education vote, ready with facts: on the other hand there was a need for hand-outs; perfection could not be achieved immediately and while other lobbying took place opportunities for upgrade should be used.

A suggestion was made that each region should undertake as a project a detailed comparison of text books of white and black schools.

14. ADVICE OFFICE REPORTS.

A. ALBANY ADVICE OFFICE. Report presented by Marion Lacey.

Appendix 14.

Conference congratulated the Grahamstown workers and Rosemary Smith, compiler of the report. Report adopted.

B. CAPE WESTERN - ATHLONE ADVICE OFFICE.

Appendix 15  
& 15a.

The Athlone Advice office report for the year 1977 to 1978, with a supplementary report for January and February 1979 was presented by Noel Robb. Arising out of the report, Sheena Duncan pointed out that it was illegal to make workers redundant in the middle of their contract, and that a lawyer's letter to the employer could stop this practice. Report adopted.

Court attendance report, prepared by Di Ratcliffe, was presented by Appendix 15b Mary Coke. Joyce Harris urged all regions to monitor the courts regularly and congratulated Mary Coke and the other court visitors. Sheena Duncan noted that in Johannesburg black law students had visited a court and written a press report

on the situation they had found (e.g. incorrect translation by the court's interpreters); they had also confirmed the findings of Black Sash monitors that in section 29 courts, so far, people were not being lightly declared "idle and undesirable." Report adopted.

C. NATAL COASTAL ADVICE OFFICE. Report presented by Solveig Piper. Appendix 16.

The resolution at the end of this section on advice office reports was mooted in discussion arising out of this report. Apart from the recommendations mentioned in this resolution,

the following suggestions were noted by conference:

- (i) that the housing figures given in the report could be put into booklet form:
  - (ii) that all advice offices should keep on file all wage board determinations.
- Report adopted.

D. NATAL MIDLANDS. Report read by Bobby Cluver. Appendix 17.

Report read by Bobbie Cluver and followed by considerable discussion on low wages and exploitation of domestic, farm and casual workers. Report adopted.

E. PRETORIA ADVICE OFFICE. Report presented by Pauline Berman. Appendix 18a.  
Report adopted.

F. JOHANNESBURG ADVICE OFFICE. Report presented by Sheena Duncan. Appendix 18.

Report adopted with special tribute to Sheena Duncan, Elizabeth Rowe and all Johannesburg advice office workers.

Arising out of the advice office reports,

Conference, having considered the reports of Advice Offices from all parts of the country, which reveal a wide range of exploitative practices affecting black workers, resolves to give greater publicity to the findings of the regional Advice Offices and accordingly requests headquarters to liaise with each office in implementing this resolution.

AGREED.

and, COPIES OF CONTRACTS:

that the Black Sash annual national conference, after noting that contrary to normal procedure involving written contracts a black migrant (contract) worker is not supplied with a copy of his/her contract of employment, resolves

- (a) to call on all employers of migrant workers, particularly those who have subscribed to Codes of Ethics (Sullivan, EEC, Urban Foundation) to adopt without delay, and to make public, their adoption of the practice of supplying each migrant worker with a copy of his/her contract at the beginning of his period of employment:
- (b) to call on the Department of Labour to institute legislation obliging all employers of migrant (contract) workers to supply their employees with such copies:
- (c) to call on Trade Union organizations and other relevant bodies to press, and encourage all workers to press for the obligatory provision of copies of contracts to workers affected.

(proposed M. Nash, seconded M. Lacey)

AGREED

G. CITIZENSHIP AND LEASEHOLD. Sheena Duncan presented this paper. Appendix 19

Dr Koornhof had said that a "qualified" man, buying a house in a prescribed area would be allowed to have his "unqualified" wife to live with him in it; but three months after this statement people were being refused this permission.

conference suggested that public attention should be drawn to the number of times that "major concessions" of this kind had been announced with fanfare, only to be withdrawn or negated shortly after, with little or no publicity. (Proposed J. Wentzel)

15. SQUATTERS AND HOMELANDS.

A. WINTERVELD REPORT. Presented by Pauline Berman. Appendix 20

B. VISIT TO MZINGA RESERVE (Mdukutshani - a homeland - Sash Magazine February 1979) Appendix 21  
Sheena Duncan presented this report.

C. REPORTS FROM REGIONS.

- (i) Marion Lacey spoke about the Ekuleni resettlement area and asked that next year conference should give special attention to the lack of rural development.
- (ii) Laurine Platsky commented on MBEKWENI, and asked that this be included in the subjects to be brought to the attention of Dr Koornhof. Appendix 22.
- (iii) Factors relating to SQUATTERS SETTLEMENTS IN DURBAN WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO MALUKAZI AND CLERMONT. Appendix 23.

In presenting this fact paper Ms Williams outlined the situation in Malukazi and Clermont, pointing out that Clermont was one of the few area where blacks could purchase land on a freehold basis. Landowners rented their land to squatters and when they had earned enough from rents to build a house they would then appeal to the officials to get rid of the unwanted tenants. Landowners were also warned that if they did not develop a property within 1-2 years, the property would be expropriated. These two factors gave rise to sporadic demolitions throughout the area. The land had originally been church land, which had been sold to blacks. When the missionaries were forced to leave, so-called "rack renting" of land started. Dr Nash pointed out that according to Dewar the government should be establishing Third World black cities on account of the rapid increase in black population. Instead, the government had embarked on a massive de-urbanisation programme through resettlement of blacks in semi-desert and desert regions. Metropolitan squatting areas would become centres of conflict while de-urbanisation would cause anger, frustration and bitterness, giving rise to conflict in country areas as well.

the Sash should focus in on this situation, which resulted from Government policy and could only escalate if the process were not reversed.

Ms Ingrid Stewart said that demolitions were still going on in Clermont and the only law the government could apply there was under the Group Areas Act, but the land could not be sold to whites as it was owned by blacks. It was a black area surrounded by a white industrial area. However, the Clermont people were in a position to establish spontaneous settlements on their own land. It was not true to refer to it as a slum:

we should create awareness that spontaneous settlements were not slums, nor were they breeding places for crime. The Sash should watch for such statements and deny them.

- (iv) Memorandum on WALMER TOWNSHIP IN PORT ELIZABETH. Appendix 24.

Presented by Marion Lacey.

D. DEPUTATION TO DR KOORNHOF. To take place Thursday 15 March 4 p.m.

The deputation would consist of Sheena Duncan, Jay Williams, Solveig Piper, Noel Robb and Joyce Harris. Ms Harris itemised the subject matter to be discussed with the Minister as follows:

HOUSING. (a) qualified men who have to live in bachelor hostels without their wives.

(b) Alexandra: demolition of houses; break up of families; (c) the leasehold scheme (i) in relation to unqualified wives of men who are able to purchase, (ii) anxiety over legal rights to occupy for descendents of citizens of newly independent states, (iii) lack of leasehold in Western Cape; (d) the need for housing for those who cannot afford to buy; (e) housing for families whose head is a woman, (f) 1968 regulations governing urban residential areas, (g) financing of administration boards, (h) spontaneous settlements.

CITIZENSHIP. (a) the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act and the effects of independence;

(b) Citizenship in relation to the independence of Vendaland and other homelands which request independence in the future.

UNEMPLOYMENT. (a) in coloured labour preference areas (b) in other urban areas, (c) the effects of resettlements, influx control and the migrant labour system on the unemployed in rural areas; (d) skilled and educated young people unemployed in rural areas; (e) farm labour.

ADMINISTRATION. (a) Pensions; (b) administrative procedures; (c) increased rents; (d) attitudes of those officials of administration boards and of the Department of Plural Relations who deal directly with the public.

THE POLICY, and the prospects for reconciliation between black and white in the future.

E. HOUSING, SQUATTER RESOLUTION.

that all people in South Africa regardless of race are entitled to family housing, both economic and subsidized, close to work opportunities, with basic services and amenities provided and security of tenure. Furthermore they are entitled to real and decisive participation in identifying their housing problems and developing solutions.

conference rejects the priority being given by the government and private enterprise in providing and subsidizing housing for middle and upper income South Africans of all races, while failing to address themselves adequately to the housing needs of the vast majority of the population. (proposed Natal C) AGREED

16. HOUSING.

Eulalie Stott gave a talk on municipal housing in the Cape peninsula.

A. COMMENTS ON A PROPOSAL FOR A HEALTHY AND VIABLE HUMAN SETTLEMENT AT GALESHEWE, KIMBERLEY. Presented by Jane Prinsloo. Appendix 2<sup>c</sup>

Two recommendations arose from this paper:

- (i) that a study group be formed to develop a Charter of Living Rights
- (ii) that Sash look at companies who have agreed to a code of employment and see whether they are also accepting responsibility for the living conditions of their employees. Lobbying of government could bring pressure in this area.

B. EVICTIONS IN JOHANNESBURG.

Lesley Hermer reported on Black Sash protest against evictions of blacks living in "white" areas in Johannesburg.

There were 10,000 coloured and Indian people living in white group areas such as Mayfair and Doornfontein, as well as about 1,000 living in buildings in the Johannesburg city area. These people were there because there was no accommodation for them in their own areas and they had nowhere else to go. The department of Community Development maintained that they did not evict unless complaints were lodged by white neighbours. It was true that the National Front were the instigators of a series of complaints. An ad-hoc committee called ACTSTOP had been convened consisting of affected people and interested organizations who had agreed to function on a non-political basis. When approached by this committee, well knowing that Lenasia houses were already overcrowded, the Minister of Community Development had said that accommodation would be available in 1982: meanwhile people would have to "double up."

Ms Hermer mentioned the Naidu family, who had been evicted from a house in Mayfair and had been living with all their possessions in a tent on the pavement while a half a mile away a block of flats stood empty.

The Black Sash had formed a support roster of people to be present at all times at the house of the Altafs who had been served with an eviction notice, and had been on guard at the Naidu tents when the tents and belongings were loaded onto trucks by community development: they had raised the alarm so that the removal of possessions had taken place with full publicity.

The Black Sash had lobbied the City Council management committee to take some action and following on a resolution to this effect raised in the City Council by Selma Browde (PRP City Councillor and Black Sash member) the management committee had agreed to consider the matter.

Arising out of discussion on this report:

the Black Sash conference deplores the tendency among South African community leaders, ad hoc committees and organizations to shy away from using the word "political," indeed to fall over backwards to declare their activities "non-political."

By doing so they generate an unwholesome atmosphere in which political action is assumed to be illegitimate and unclean.

this conference affirms that extra-parliamentary political action is to be encouraged and recognised as a wholesome interaction between people who should be proud not ashamed to declare their activities political. (Proposed J. Wentzel. Unan with acclaim) AGREED.

C. UMZIMHOPE HOSTEL (JOHANNESBURG) Ethel Walt reported.

There were 11,000 - 15,000 people crowded into the hostel - 1,350 families with an average of 9 children per family. The hostel consisted of blocks of rooms



with a single entrance to a communal kitchen and four rooms to house four families. Rent was paid on bed space or per adult and receipts showed an amount of R49.10 per month for a seven-member family unit with the only breadwinner earning R85 per month. The ablution block that Sash members examined served 6 residential blocks which housed 48 families. It consisted of 4 lavatories and 4 basins, no doors or windows but only a hole in the wall as entrance. Some lavatories were blocked and in any case the block became flooded when it rained and the effluent ran down the slope in the open. There were no showers. One building, once used as a play centre for 20 children now housed 200 people. The whole was a ~~bliss~~ bliss of despair created with official sanction.

17. ECONOMICS AND LABOUR.

A. URBANIZATION AND LABOUR MIGRATION. Daphne Venturas. Tabled. Appendix 26.

B. WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

(i) Fact paper from Natal Coastal. Appendix 27.

In presenting this paper Solveig Piper said that there appeared to be no check by the Department on employers, who could collect an employee's compensation merely by stating that he had already paid the amount due and requesting a cheque be made out in his (the employer's) name.

Ms Piper was proceeding with her investigation and with legal help hoped to suggest legislation to cover this defect.

(ii) Fact Paper from Transvaal. Written by Jose Adler. Appendix 28.

Sheila Lawrence presented this paper for Jose Adler. She drew conference's attention to Ms Adler's claim that it was a waste of time trying to trace people, there being no doubt that the Department did make an effort to trace them without much success.

Conference noted the following suggestions both from Ms Adler's paper and from conference delegates:

- (a) Transvaal and Natal should combine their efforts in this field.
- (b) pressure should be put on employers to follow up and see that employees got the compensation due to them.
- (c) attention should be given to the system of paying out awards in small monthly sums and the necessity for a special application in order to get a lump sum payment.
- (d) that the present system of letter-writing, which seemed to be a duplication of work done by the Workmen's Compensation Commissioner, should be dropped and Sash should concentrate efforts on some or all of the suggestions listed in Ms Adler's report; pressing for amended regulations and procedures; approaches to employers including the mines, municipalities and large construction companies, as well as FEMA, RMAC and the Railways to find out how they can more effectively process the claims they handle; initiation of the same kind of awareness programme that is already working with UIF among workers.

C. IMPLICATIONS OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT. Appendix 29.

Daphne Venturas spoke to this paper, which covered investment throughout Africa so that the subject could be seen as a whole, and answered questions from delegates.

D. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND. Fact paper from Natal Coastal. Appendix

Solveig Piper asked conference to note the correction "30 days," instead of "21 days" to lodge an appeal. Also delete last paragraph on page 3.

It was suggested that pressure should be put on employers to pay into UIF. There was a fine of R200 for defaulting but many employers still failed to comply.

E. PENSIONS. Fact paper from Natal Coastal. Appendix 31.

Mary Grice presented this paper. The position regarding pensions in Umlazi was desperate. Kwazulu did not have any money and pensioners were paid only every six months.

Black Sash intended to take action once an old person could be found whose age could be established and who had not received a pension. As a pension was a civil right it could be taken to court.

Marion Lacey said that if pensions were not collected after four vouchers had been sent they were returned to Pretoria.

Ms. Grice mentioned that when a Kwa Zulu magistrate was approached on behalf of a disabled old person, he said that a number of factors were considered before paying a pension.

Ms. Duncan said the same reluctance to pay pensions was shown in all areas - adult children were often used as an excuse.

Gita Dyzenhaus stressed the point of differentiation between black and white : duty to support from adult children was not written into the Act. Also, whites and coloureds did not have to collect their pensions : they could arrange for them to be paid into an account.

F. TRADE UNION RESOLUTION (no 3 ex Natal Coastal)

Ms. Piper spoke to the resolution

Conference recognises that ;

- (a) all workers - regardless of race, colour, creed or sex - have the right to express their will through elected representatives ;
- (b) African workers have the right to join the unions of their choice and to have such unions recognised as the legitimate representatives ; and
- (c) employers have the power to recognise unregistered unions as legitimate representatives, without legal obstacle :

CONFERENCE therefore :

- (1) censures employers for failing to take the initiative in creating stable industrial relations in South Africa by recognising these unions ;
- (2) believes that by so doing employers have promoted confrontation rather than reconciliation ;
- (3) calls upon employers to show their good faith by recognising the elected representatives of their workers without waiting for the outcome of the Wiehan Commission

(unan) AGREED

H. SOUTH AFRICA - the ROAD TO A JUST SOCIETY. Sean Archer. Appendix 3:  
(Not itemised on the agenda)

Laurine Platsky delivered Sean Archer's paper.

CONSTITUTIONAL CAMPAIGN (Business arising out of discussion at evening session on Tuesday 13th March)

There was much discussion on the line to be taken by the Black Sash and the nature of any national campaign. The necessity for impact on the public was emphasised.

The following were suggested : A "referendum" whereby the public were asked to return forms ; a layman's guide to the constitution be published ; a newspaper advert ; Black Sash should concentrate on exclusion of minorities ; billboards - different ones every week ; newspaper adverts and handouts ; Mary Burton maintained the Black Sash was richer in woman power than in money and handouts meant involve for them ; a campaign which emphasised that whites would be under a dictator ; picture of black women and children emphasising their exclusion.; call for a referendum ; car stickers and logos (long narrow sticker suggested) ; symbol (like badge) to appear on everything connected with Black Sash that is published ;.

that the Black Sash finds the proposed new constitution totally unacceptable because it excludes three quarters of the population of South Africa, namely sixteen million Africans

it therefore solves none of the problems with which the country is faced, hinders the process of shaping an alternative future, and can only lead to escalating conflict, violence and suffering.

In the interest /--  
Page 9./

In the interest of peace and justice the Black Sash rejects the proposed new constitution. We will not waste our resources on criticising and opposing details of a refined apartheid plan for entrenching white power and privilege.

We will use our resources to expose and resist as energetically as possible the balkanisation of the country, the division of its black people into relatively powerless ethnic units and the co-option of minority groups such as Indians and so-called "coloureds" into the white power structure.

And we will continue to co-operate with all people of goodwill in the struggle for human rights and liberties for All South Africans.

(Proposed M. Nash, seconded M. Lacey)  
(1 against)

AGREED.

The following proposed handout on the constitution was tabled for consideration by headquarters and regions.

"Message for 1979. South Africa is a black country in which some whites live. The proposed new constitution is for a white country in which no blacks would have human rights. Such a constitution is no use to South Africa and no use to us. Throw it out!"

18. INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

In her lead-in to this discussion, Joyce Harris reported on Black Sash representation of the Johannesburg Mayor's Year of the Child Committee and sub-committees. She felt the Black Sash had a valid contribution to make to the International Year of the Child programmes in South Africa in that it was vitally necessary to emphasise the problems of black children arising out of the system; pass laws, housing, unemployment etc.,. Black Sash had already had some small success in that migrant labour and on children arrested under the riotous assemblies act were being discussed.

After discussing various suggestions :

conference agreed that a booklet be drawn up (as already mooted in the Transvaal) in which under the headings of the United Nations Charter for Children, advice office cases be used to show violations in South Africa Regions would co-operate in collecting relevant cases.

19. REVISED CHARTER FOR WOMEN.

Jane Prinsloo presented the suggestions made by her sub-committee

Sheena Duncan asked about the specific purpose of the Charter.

M. Dix replied that it clarified where the Black Sash stood on this issue and Mary Burton felt a woman's Charter should be publicised and also that it would be a good topic for study groups.

Discussion followed on recommendations submitted by Transvaal and Natal Coastal. It was finally agreed to discuss each clause separately. AGREED

- (1) every woman should have the right to full adult legal status on the attainment of legal majority :
- (2) every woman should have the right to take part in the government of her country, either through election to office or through the exercise of her vote.
- (3) every woman should have the right to seek employment on an equal basis with men and to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal pay for equal work and the right to organise.
- (4) every woman should have the right to freedom of movement and to choose her place of residence.
- (5) every woman should have the right to own or rent property in her own name.
- (6) every woman should have the right to equal security in the event of unemployment sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond her control.

Over clause 7 there was long discussion, amendments were proposed and lost or insufficiently supported.

- (7) that every woman should have the right to decide whether or not she will bear children.

(17 FOR, 5 AGAINST, 3 ABSTENTIONS)

AGREED

- (8) every woman who is a mother should have the right to live with, protect and care for her children.
- (9) every woman should have the right to free and equal education for her children.

There was discussion over clause 10, especially whether to include the word "free".

- (10) that every woman should have the right of access to adequate and appropriate health care for herself and her family.  
(not unanimously) AGREED
- (11) every woman should have the right to enter into a marriage contract with the person of her choice, free from compulsion, coercion or restriction.
- (12) every woman should have the right to live with her husband throughout her married life.

20. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS.

- A. that this National Conference ratifies the constitution of the Black Sash as amended by the Special National Conference held in Johannesburg on July 22nd 1978. AGREED
- B. that section 6 (viii) of the Constitution be amended to substitute the word "all" for the word "any" and the word "bearers" for the word "bearer", and to delete the words "from each Region." AGREED
- C. that section 6 (ix) of the Constitution be amended to insert the word "voting" between the words "the" and "provisions". AGREED
- D. that section 16 (ii) of the Constitution be amended to insert the words "present and" between the words "members" and "entitled". AGREED
- E. LEVIES ON ASSOCIATE MEMBERS.

After discussion during which Pretoria registered its opinion that regions should be levied on associate members, it was proposed :  
that conference agrees that Regions be not levied on associate members ;  
AGREED

21. ELECTION OF HEADQUARTERS REGION.

Conference noted that this traditional item on the agenda was unnecessary as it depended on the election of National President.

22. ELECTION OF NATIONAL PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS.

Mary Burton took the Chair.

A. Election of National President.

Joyce Harris nominated by Marion Lacey, seconded by Noel Robb and elected with acclaim. Jill Wentzel thanked Joyce Harris for the year she spent in office which had been especially difficult.

B. Election of National Vice-Presidents.

The following nominated : Gita Dyzenhaus, Jill Wentzel, Sheena Duncan  
Jill Wentzel did not accept nomination.  
Sheena Duncan and Gita Dyzenhaus elected.

23. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT NATIONAL CONFERENCE.

Gita Dyzenhaus said Transvaal would be delighted to host the next Conference. Joyce Harris suggested delegates from small regions might go back to their regions to find out if they could manage to host the next conference.

Ms. Platsky suggested the University Campuses vacation as conference venues for smaller regions. In the meantime :

next Conference to be held in Johannesburg on Monday 10th March 1980.

The National President appealed to Regions to submit fact papers before December 1979

Cape Western thanked with acclaim for a superb Conference. Special thanks for the floral decorations.

Mary Graham, Biddy Greene, Liz Biggs, Joan Lomborg, Di Andrews and S. Raynham thanked for taking minutes.

24. GENERAL.

A. POINTS TO NOTE FOR FUTURE CONFERENCES.

- i) Netty Davidoff suggested we have fewer fact papers during Conference. Joyce Harris, however, pointed out that this might mean less work was done. Jill Wentzel mentioned that fact papers formed the basis of Conference publicity and pleaded that they be not limited.
- ii) Netty Davidoff suggested that each Region print its papers on its own particular colour. Conference concurred, but with reservations because of possible increased costs.
- iii) It was urgently requested, and conference concurred, that enough copies of fact papers be provided for observers to Conference.
- iv) Margaret Nash suggested
  - (a) that Black Sash went metric for future Conferences and
  - (b) that the first section of future Conferences be a "State of the nation" review so that urgent priorities would receive the attention they deserved.

B. NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR STUDY RIGHTS FOR PRISONERS.

Solveig Piper reported that

A special committee had been formed to campaign for study rights for prisoners.

She represented the Black Sash on this committee and would send copies of the campaign proposals to Regions, who were asked to keep in touch with her on this matter.

In closing, conference passed with acclaim a vote of thanks to Headquarters for their hard work, to the three Chairmen of Regions present.