

THE BLACK SASH.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS' REPORT FOR THE YEAR MARCH 1975 to MARCH 1976.

NATIONAL OFFICE BEARERS.

National President	Ms. Sheena Duncan
National Vice Presidents.	Ms. Joyce Harris Ms. Gita Dyzenhaus
Magazine Editors	Ms. Joyce Harris Ms. Pat Tucker.
National Treasurer	Ms. Bertha Beinashowitz
National Secretary	Ms. Esther Levitan.

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Because of the difficulty which always arises in distinguishing between which activities fall under the aegis of Transvaal Region and which under Headquarters, it was decided that this year all major activities would be included in the Transvaal Regional Report and that the Headquarters Report would be confined to those matters which are clearly Headquarters affairs.

National Demonstration :

The theme of this demonstration, held in all Regions on 6th August, 1975, and using the same posters and pamphlets, was "Detente At Home". It required a great deal of organisation and received varying degrees of Press publicity in the different centres. In assessing its effectiveness - always a difficult thing to do - we should be encouraged by the fact that we were probably the first organisation to emphasize the necessity for detente at home if detente outside the country was to succeed, and that this is a theme now being increasingly adopted by others. Certainly from the point of view of the Black Sash itself, it provided us with a common objective and was responsible for a good deal of healthy contact between Headquarters and all the other Regions.

International Visitor :

This proposed visit, suggested at our 1975 Conference, was put in motion through the services of an intermediary, but it was eventually decided to leave it over for the time being as we were advised that the invitation might prove an embarrassment to the person concerned.

Memoranda :

Two Memoranda were written, one to the Department of Bantu Administration and Development on the dependence of the Bantu Administration Boards on the sale of liquor, and one on Rehabilitation Centres which was widely published and quoted in the local and overseas Press. Our National President, Sheena Duncan, did a magnificent job in this regard. The Memorandum on the Pass Laws is practically out of print but will not be updated until the expected new legislation is promulgated.

Law Society Correspondence : /—

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A copy of this correspondence concerning the Terrorism Act and Detention Without Trial was circulated to Regions and appears in full in the November 1975 issue of SASH.

Advice Offices :

With the opening of an Advice Office in Pietermaritzburg during this year there are now seven Advice Offices functioning - in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, East London, Grahamstown, Pietermaritzburg and Pretoria. In addition to the very real contribution they make in assisting Black people with their difficulties with the Pass Laws, they are also a unique source of information and knowledge which provides us with much material for dissemination.

Natal Coastal Advice Office experienced some difficulties and Ms. Duncan visited their office and that of Natal Midlands, where her expertise proved very valuable.

Bantu Welfare Trust Money :

Application was made for an increased grant because of extra Advice Offices and rising costs, and an additional sum of R500 was received. We are most grateful for this continued generosity, without which our Advice Offices would be hard-pressed indeed.

"The Law and You" :

A series of teaching articles on the Pass Laws and related subjects prepared by Mrs. Duncan in conjunction with Turret Correspondence College, has been published in "Weekend World".

Book on the Black Sash :

Cherry Michelman's book, "The Black Sash of South Africa", has been published and is on sale in South Africa - a critical, interesting and valuable document on our history.

Photographic Exhibition :

Cape Western returned this exhibition to Headquarters whence it went to Durban and it is still available to any region that wants it.

Public Relations :

There have been numerous visits to the office from overseas travellers and Press representatives, a few interested local people, and students.

We have been represented and active on the Johannesburg International Women's Year Committee. There was articulate Black antagonism towards the Grahamstown Conference, but our President and Honorary Life President, both of whom had been invited to attend and participate, decided to go. However, the position of the Black Sash was made very clear in a published reply to a statement made by Mrs. Thelma Neville in which she mentioned Sash. One objective of I.W.Y was the compilation of a list of women's organisations for publication, and the Black Sash is included in this list.

We have been and still are represented and active on the Women's Legal Status Committee.

We continue to maintain/—

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We continue to maintain a relationship of mutual help and co-operation with the Institute of Race Relations, and were represented at their Annual General Meeting, the theme of which was "Detente".

Mrs. Duncan accepted an invitation to be a delegate to the Conference organised by the Agency for Industrial Mission on the Church Role among Migrant Mine Workers.

The Black Sash was asked to participate in the "Women Walk Home" march on the island of Cyprus in support of refugee women. We signified our support of the international appeal to implement U.N. Resolution 3212, and sent a Black Sash badge as a symbol of this.

Addresses by the National President :

Ms. Duncan was invited to address twelve organisations during the year and gave twenty public addresses. They were to the Star Women's Club on three occasions, Students Orientation Course at Wits. International Women's Year meeting, St. Mary's Chapel Congregation, NUSAS on two occasions, Woodmead Foundation Day, Union of Jewish Women, Michael House and Roedean, Law Students twice, Grahamstown International Convention of Women twice, Johannesburg North Central Rotarians, and a public meeting in East London.

Contact with Regions :

There has been quite a considerable amount of correspondence between the Regions and Headquarters, though some Regions maintain closer contact than others. In addition to her visits to Natal Coastal and Natal Midlands, Ms. Duncan also visited Border, where she addressed a public meeting.

Correspondence :

Besides regional correspondence we have written to Mrs. Helen Suzman and other Members of Parliament on relevant topics ; the Minister of Community Development ; the Secretary of Bantu Administration and Labour ; the Federated Chamber of Industries on Migrant Labour ; the Minister of Foreign Affairs nominating Jean Sinclair as a South African representative to the Women's Conference in Mexico ; Mr. E. Pavett on a public statement he made ; and Mr. Sonny Leon expressing our support for his stand.

Enquiries about the Black Sash have been received from as far afield as Japan, the U.S.A., Australia, Switzerland and Germany.

Jean Sinclair : Our Honorary Life President was elected by the readers of the Star as Star Woman of the Year. We feel that this was very well merited recognition of her many years of service in the interests of freedom and justice for all in this country, and we congratulate her.

20th Birthday :

We celebrated our 20th birthday with a very successful, enjoyable and well-attended luncheon party at the home of Joan and Robert Sinclair.

Personnel :/---

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Personnel :

The Headquarters executive has worked well together, with Gita Dyzenhaus as my co vice president, and Esther Levitan as our most efficient and capable National Secretary.

Bertha Beinashowitz is our sound and sensible National Treasurer, with Dora Hill stepping in and taking over during her absence.

I took over the Editorship of SASH Magazine from Sheena Duncan and have been most ably supported and assisted by Pat Tucker. I also deputised as National President during Sheena's severe illness.

In conclusion I should like to congratulate Sheena Duncan for stepping into her mother's illustrious shoes as National President with so much ability and poise. Her undoubted qualities of leadership coupled with her incisive intelligence are a very great asset to the Black Sash.

JOYCE HARRIS  
NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT.