

THE BLACK SASH

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS' REPORT FOR

THE YEAR MARCH 1976 * TO MARCH 1977.

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.
Secretary	Ms. Esther Levitan

This report is by no means a true reflection of the work done by Headquarters because it is so often impossible to distinguish between what falls under Headquarters and what under Transvaal Region. Accordingly all major activities have been included in the Transvaal Regional Report. Some headings have been duplicated, while some could equally well have appeared in either report.

ARISING FROM CONFERENCE 1976.

National Campaign.

Various methods were explored for launching a national campaign to highlight specific issues and press for change, tying this in with the granting of independence to the Transkei and possibly with the launching of Barbara Waite's map on removals, and all Regions were constantly consulted. However the pressure of events made it impossible to orchestrate this project and, as a compromise, Regions were asked to highlight the cynicism of Transkei Independence in their own areas and to give thought to and attempt to clarify Black Sash reaction to change.

Lobbying.

The memorandum setting out guidelines on Lobbying Techniques, prepared by Jill Wentzel, was circulated to all Regions.

Record of Research Projects.

Conference decision that Headquarters should keep a record and notify all Regions of any research project undertaken by any one Region could not be implemented as no notification was received of any such projects outside reports published in the magazine. We feel the magazine when properly indexed will be such a record.

Magazine.

Work is in progress on the creation of a subject-matter index of all SASH magazines.

Tapes and Cassettes./---

Tapes and Cassettes.

Headquarters investigated the cost of a cassette recorder. As the price at that time was R79.00 all Regions were asked if they had machines on which to play cassettes before making the purchase. Nothing further has been done in this regard because only ^{one} Region responded to our inquiry.

R I O T S.

All Regions were kept informed of Headquarters actions in regard to the unrest. Press statements including those on police shooting and lost children and suggested handouts were circulated, together with the Memorandum to the Cillie Commission of Enquiry. Mrs. Duncan was called to give evidence before the Commission.

WOMEN FOR PEACE.

Misunderstandings arose between the Black Sash and Women for Peace in Johannesburg as a result of some rather mischievous press statements, and Mrs. Duncan and I called on Mrs. Oppenheimer and Mrs. Celliers. There are certainly very real differences in emphasis between the attitudes and priorities of the two organisations, but there is also growing co-operation.

FAMSA SYMPOSIUM.

The Black Sash was invited to attend this symposium on Migrant Labour and Mrs. Duncan and Mrs. Levitan were present. Mrs. Duncan was congratulated by Mr. Justice Trengrove, who presided, on her timely contribution in drawing attention to the fundamental defects and inequities of the migrant labour system.

DISCRIMINATION CONFERENCE.

Mrs. Duncan was invited to attend the Conference on Discrimination organised by the Progressive Reform Party, which she did.

CIRCULAR TO REGIONS.

There were 20 circulars to Regions, which, in addition to subjects already mentioned in this report, dealt with wage determination for unskilled workers ; unemployment insurance ; social pensions ; detentions ; the NUSAS trial the Internal Security Bill ; the Squatters Bill ; Transkei Independence ; Pass Law letters to Members of Parliament and their replies ; questions on attitudes and strategies in response to the riots, unrest and uncertainty ; handout and statement on Legal Aid ; the Women's Legal Status Committee ; bannings and the Industrial Aid Society ; the Anglican Synod and Mrs. Duncan's resolution with regard to the assumption of responsibility to continue the work of banned and detained persons ; and the report on the P.R.P Conference on Race Discrimination.

CONTACT WITH REGIONS

There was not always as much feed back from Regions as Headquarters would have liked, but certainly there was more co-ordinated nation wide action on legislation and events as a result of Mrs. Duncan's numerous and informative circulars.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO REGIONS.

Mrs. Duncan visited Cape Western Region twice - once in May when she took part in a public meeting on the Squatters Bill and again in October to address a public meeting on change. She also visited Grahamstown in December and addressed a Black Sash meeting. Mrs. Sinclair, deputising for Mrs. Duncan

who was ill, visited Natal Coastal, where she participated in a Brain's Trust

ADDRESSES BY NATIONAL PRESIDENT.

In addition to the two public meetings in Cape Town Mrs. Duncan has also addressed the Waverley Discussion Group, the Rotary Club, Northcliff, on People versus Democracy ; Sandton DWEF workers; the Pretoria Branch, the Union of Jewish Women and the students of the University of the Witwatersrand on current legislation and a meeting of the Grahamstown Black Sash. Other appointments had to be cancelled owing to her illness.

PUBLIC RELATIONS.

Headquarters has been in contact with Mr. H. E. Van Rensburg M.P., in connection with a protest campaign against racial discrimination and he was given the information he required ; Mr. R. Deffenbaugh of Windhoek about the opening of an Advice Office there ; Mr. Alistair Sparks to congratulate him on the success of the Sunday Express ; the P.R.P about the calling of a National Convention ; the United States Consul General about the riots ; Mr. Jim Bailey who wanted the Black Sash to administer a bursary fund set up by DRUM ; the United Party regarding their pamphlet on the Graaff initiative ; the South African Foundation, which invited Mrs. Duncan to a luncheon after itself responding to an invitation to visit the Advice Office ; and the Civil Rights League, with whom we agreed to cooperate in the establishment of vigilance panels all over the country.

ADVICE OFFICE.

There are seven Advice Offices in operation in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Pietermaritzburg, Durban, East London and Grahamstown. Their reports are tabled separately.

BANTU WELFARE TRUST.

An allocation of R3,500 was received from the Bantu Welfare Trust as a contribution towards the running costs of the Advice Offices. The Black Sash is extremely grateful to the Trust for its continued and increasing generosity, without which it would be almost impossible to continue.

PERSONNEL.

Esther Levitan is our extremely efficient and reliable secretary, and Bertha Beinashowitz, assisted by Dora Hill, our sound and our sensible Treasurer. Jeanette Davidoff deputised for Mrs. Beinashowitz and Mrs. Hill during their joint absence, and I deputised for Sheena Duncan during her illness.

Mrs. Duncan merits the warm congratulations and very real gratitude of the Black Sash for the efficient and impressive manner in which she has carried out her public duties and the successful efforts she has made to maintain contact between all Regions, keeping them informed of activities in other Regions and giving them a valuable lead in a very difficult period in the history of our country. We are indeed fortunate to have her as our National President.

JOYCE HARRIS
NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT.