

Sash

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photo: Tannenbaum — Sigma

Violence is inevitable when the State uses its whole repressive machinery to prevent grievances from being expressed . . . to insist that control by the few over the many continues

Sheena Duncan, presidential address, March 1985



1955 — Bearing the petitions to the Prime Minister's deputy, Mr Ben Schoeman, Minister of Transport — the marchers are nearing the top of the long hill leading to the Union Buildings. In front, behind the drummer (from left) Mrs Bessie Brummer, Mrs Jean Sinclair, Mrs Ruth Foley, Miss Marjorie Juta. photo: 'The Black Sash' by Mirabel Rogers

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Cover picture: Police cordon, Uitenhage township, March 1985 — by kind permission of Sygma
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Production editor: Joyce Brown



National conference 1985

Presidential address

Sheena Duncan

This year the Black Sash will observe its 30th anniversary.

It was May 19, 1955 that six women met together in Johannesburg in anger about the introduction of the Senate Bill in Parliament.

As you know, it was that legislation which packed the Senate with sufficient members of the National Party to enable the government in the following year to remove coloured people from the common voter's roll.

The energy of those women is quite astonishing as is the speed with which they acted. The next day hundreds of women came together and addressed a petition to the mayor requesting him to call a public meeting.

On May 25, 1955, 2 000 women marched to the City Hall to join 18 000 Johannesburg citizens who had gathered there to protest against the Senate Bill. The Women's Defence of the Constitution League had come into being.

It was then decided that two petitions should be drawn up, one to the Prime Minister calling on him to repeal the legislation or to resign, the other to the Governor General asking him to withhold his assent from the Act. Women, working in continuous shifts over the weekend of June 4, 5 and 6 dispatched petition forms all over the country.

More than 100 000 women signed the two petitions within the next ten days. The petition to the Governor General was handed to his secretary with 94 680 signatures. The Prime Minister refused to receive a delegation from the League. On June 28, over 1 000 women representing dozens of cities, towns and villages in South Africa marched to the Union buildings in Pretoria to hand over the petition to the Prime Minister calling for his resignation. For 48 hours, in the bitterly cold highveld winter, 80 women held vigil at the Union Buildings.

Those were the days when freedom of assembly still existed in this country. In the 30 years which have gone by since that time, this right to come together in protest has been taken away piece by piece beginning with bans imposed on gatherings in the central city of Johannesburg and in a large area around Parliament in Cape Town, to the present total ban on all outdoor gatherings which has been in force since 1976.

A gathering is defined as more than one person coming together, so for the past eight years Black Sash demonstrations have been one woman standing alone with her poster, out of sight of the next person. Even this is now under threat from the police. In November last year in a combined protest with Churches, DPSC and other organisations calling for the release of detainees, demonstrators were arrested in a massive police action as soon as they took up positions. Posters were confiscated, charges laid and a long-drawn-out investigation is apparently being conducted by the police.

It is my belief that this ban on outdoor gatherings together with the frequent temporary bans on indoor gatherings and on funerals must be held largely responsible for the chaos which is now the way of life in many black townships. People who have come together in orderly fashion to picket polling booths in the August elections, to demand negotiation with town councillors and Development Board officials about rents, or with Department of Education and Training officials about abuses in the intolerable bantu education system, or to bury their dead, have been ordered to disperse and when they failed to do so, have been forced to scatter in confusion by the use of tear gas, rubber bullets, bird and buck shot. Orderly organised protest and non-violent resistance is prevented. When the authorities also abuse the wide powers given to them and resort to removing leaders by detaining them for 48 hours, or indefinitely, it is not surprising that planned disciplined non-violent resistance in the form of boycotts by students, boycotts by consumers, withdrawal of labour by workers, withholding of rent by householders, become disorganised with disorganised violence cropping up in all directions. It is only a short step from that to organised and coercive violence, the evidence of which is now appearing in some places. It is inevitable that this should be so when the State uses its whole repressive machinery to prevent grievances from being expressed, to prevent demands from being laid on the negotiating table, to prevent organisation from taking place: to insist that control by the few over the many continues.

One of the issues we will be discussing at this conference is the way in which the State is laying criminal charges against those who oppose the government's policies thus keeping them in prison as awaiting trial



*Members of the Black Sash countrywide lined the railings of the Houses of Parliament, Cape Town, in a continuous vigil.
photo: 'The Black Sash' by Mirabel Rogers*

prisoners for lengthy periods or immobilising them by making issues subjudice and thus not open for discussion. Very often, charges are withdrawn at the last minute or the prosecution does not go ahead. The recent non-trial of Archbishop Hurley is just one example.

I ask you all tonight to remember Madoda Jacobs, the young leader of the Cradock Youth Organisation who was head boy of his school. He was held in preventive detention last year and is now a "listed" person. He is at present being held as an awaiting trial prisoner on a charge of murder at the Mortimer police station miles and miles from anywhere.

Also very much in our thoughts are the leaders of the UDF now awaiting trial for treason. Many of them are our personal friends. All of them are highly respected.

Those days when the Black Sash began were very different. South Africa was certainly not a democracy but the Rule of Law did mean something and people could and did look to the Courts for protection. Last year I spoke about those old fashioned people in areas threatened with removal who cannot understand that the law is not a protection anymore. They are all middle-aged to elderly. Young people in this country do not understand the concept. They have never known it and have never lived under the protection of the Rule of Law. For them, the law has always been a threat. A threat because it denies them the fundamental human rights.

I do not wish to spend time this evening going into the details of security legislation but do wish to say that one of the most urgent matters on the national agenda should be the restoration of the Rule of Law. Today's young people are tomorrow's government and it will be very bad if the injustices embodied in our law are to continue into yet another era and used for preservation of yet another government in power. There are already too many signs of coercion and cooptation of people into opposition strategies. These give cause for disquietude and anxiety. There is no time to be lost if we are to demonstrate what democracy really means.

The values which are embodied in the phrase 'Rule of

Law' are lost to us because they have not been practised for so long. We need to restore them now in order to preserve them into the future.

It is a disaster that President Botha's 'reform' programme has been marked by ever greater repression and that there are no signs whatsoever that he intends to repeal any of the repressive laws — quite the opposite in fact. 1982 saw several new laws placed on the statute book which prevent many of the legitimate activities of opposition groups — the Protection of Information Act, the Prohibition of Demonstrations in or near Court Buildings Act and, of course, the omnibus Internal Security Act.

The Women's Defence of the Constitution League held its first National Conference in Bloemfontein in April 1956. It was at that conference that the nickname given us by the press 'The Black Sash' was adopted as the official name of the organisation.

It was also at that conference that one Jeanette Davidoff was elected to the central committee. Netty is still very much with us. She is here tonight as one of the Transvaal delegates to this conference. In 1955 she was chairman of the education sub-committee whose task it was to inform and educate our own members as well as the wider public. Another one of those early stalwarts who is here as a delegate from Cape Town is Noel Robb. Her task used to be to support and look after the country branches in the western Cape. The two of them should really be up here talking to you about those first years. Some of you in this hall tonight were among those who began it and we salute you.

I was not around then but it has been very instructive for me to page through the early minute books to see what issues were engaging the Black Sash's attention at that time.

Many women had joined in outrage at what was called the 'rape of the constitution'. They had never before thought about justice in race relations or been brought to face the political consequences of the nature of South African society.

In the Cape itself we find the same uncertainty. In minutes dated October 14, 1957 we find the following entry:

'An official protest was handed in by Mrs H. A statement in the paper advertising a series of lectures had appeared with the words "open to all races". She felt this was provocative.'

One argument which is a little more familiar and not so far in our distant past is outlined in this September 30 1957 minute in Cape Town after a request for support for striking members from the Council for Canning Workers:

'... agreed that a reply should be sent stressing that we only concern ourselves with moral issues and not industrial disputes.'

This anxiety about what was or was not a moral issue crops up over and over again, very often related to relationships with the then official opposition, the United Party. The non-party political stance of the Black Sash has always been maintained but in those days when there was still a hope nurtured that the National Party might be defeated at the polls, it was a constant concern not to weaken the opposition while maintaining a principled public protest. One member in Cape Town is recorded in the minutes of September 19 as saying:

'As far as Kei Road was concerned, the quieter the Sash kept at the moment the better. It must not be seen or implied that the Sash supports the progressives.' She was evidently in a minority.

Sometimes these debates sound very strange to us now. On August 12 1959 we read:

'Mrs Stott had been asked to enquire whether atomic fall-out in the Cape Province was not dangerous. Mrs Stott wonders whether the subject of atomic bombs is a moral issue for the Sash or not.'

Eulalie Stott is still one of our most active and valued members in Cape Town.

In many ways we have not changed at all. I'm glad our offices remain untidy places with second-hand furniture and limited equipment. We have not erected barriers of technology and the paraphernalia of modern office furnishings between us and those who come to seek our help.

Allegations against the Black Sash remain much the same now as they were then. In 1959, 'loose allegations of incitement levelled at Sash' were discussed at a Cape council meeting. Only last year a member of the Cape Provincial Council accused us of creeping around the black areas at night and being always present where there was trouble.

Perhaps these accusations are not framed so quaintly as they used to be.

Before this was prohibited, Black Sash women used to hold vigil in the public gallery of the House of Assembly. They were rebuked by a National Party whip who told them:

'You ladies must not come to Parliament to propagate.'

But the issues which concerned us then are astonishingly the same as those which occupy us now — the pass laws and pass law arrests, Group Area removals, academic freedom, freedom of the press, freedom of movement, SABC propaganda, race classification, farm

labour, support for the families of detainees and how we can co-operate with organisations in this and in protest against all detentions and bannings.

Passive resistance and support for those entering into civil disobedience was an issue then as it is now. The Black Sash support for the A N C and for Chief Luthuli in those long ago days caused the same debates as has our support for the U D F in the last 18 months. Protest against the banning of Chief Luthuli was as wholehearted then as is our protest now about action taken against U D F and other leaders. Economic boycotts were very much an issue as they are now.

In August 1959 we were saying:

'In the history of South Africa the white man has so frequently broken his word that promises should not be broken now without the Africans, to whom they were made, approving of the step.'

The list of broken promises has lengthened immeasurably in the 26 years since that statement was made. Is it really now coming to an end? There is no evidence of that yet.

Allegations against the Black Sash remain much the same now as they were then. But the issues which concerned us then are astonishingly the same as those which occupy us now.

Some people have suggested that the present government has deliberately adopted a strategy of sowing confusion and uncertainty in order to introduce piecemeal reforms. This would be such an incredibly dangerous course of action that we cannot believe that any rational group of people could embark on it. The other interpretation of current government actions is that it is as confused and uncertain as everyone else and is therefore being totally inept. Whatever the reason, this country cannot afford the current total lack of clarity about government intentions nor the contradictory statements which often follow one another on a daily basis from the mouths of the same ministers.

Confusion, whether deliberately or carelessly sown, is leading to total chaos and a state of disorderliness in administration and in daily experience for the majority of people in this country, which will take us nowhere.

What does Dr Viljoen's statement about the suspension of removals mean? He did not go as far as Dr Koorhof's previous statement that, 'There will be no more forced removals,' but perhaps the public may be inclined to give greater weight to what Dr Viljoen says. When pressed, he said he supposed that there were about 26 black spots and about the same number of urban communities whose position would be reassessed. A little later the number of black spots involved was given as 67. We all know that there are 188 black spots in Natal alone which are scheduled for removal and well over 200 in the country as a whole. What does the minister mean and when is he going to say firmly and openly what his intentions are?

The urban communities of Huhudi at Vryburg and Valspan at Jan Kempdorp are reprieved from the total removal but then there is talk about their development only within existing already overcrowded boundaries. What will happen to those who cannot be fitted in?

I have given up trying to keep track of the various statements about Crossroads and Khayelitsha. Who goes and who stays is anyone's guess.

Has government accepted that all the black people who are at present in Cape Town are to be permitted to remain there or does it still intend to get rid of the 'illegals' by deporting them to those so-called foreign countries, Transkei and Ciskei?

If influx control is on its way out and if everyone is to be allowed to remain where they are, what possible reason can there be for not saying so? The failure to make clear statements of intent means that all of us, including the people concerned, remain distrustful, suspicious and very angry indeed.

On this most fundamental issue of influx control, we are left in a state of uncertainty. The whole propaganda thrust at the moment seems designed to persuade white South Africans that influx control must go and soon, that if it does not we will not be able to reduce population growth to a rate commensurate with available natural resources, that urbanisation cannot be prevented and must therefore be managed, that we cannot afford the influx control system anymore. Yet at the same time the minister is announcing proposed amendments to Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act to make certain technical adjustments and to defuse the anger of urban communities destined for incorporation within homeland borders. Section 10 is the instrument of influx control. This is the clause which says that no black person may remain in an urban area for more than 72 hours unless he or she fulfills certain conditions. If you are going to lift influx control, you certainly should not be wasting time and money tinkering around with its provisions. When announcing these changes the minister stated that no urbanisation legislation could be expected during this session of Parliament. Yet a few days later we are told that a revamped Orderly Movement bill and an Urbanisation bill are on the cards.

Influx control has to go in its entirety and it has to go very soon. The latest economic projections for the year 2000 estimate that 44% of South Africa's adult population will not be able to find employment in the formal sector. This is a fact of life and only freedom of movement and rapid urbanisation will allow that 44% to escape from hunger and poverty into the informal sector. Unrestricted growth of family enterprises and service industries will give an enormous boost to economic growth and also ensure a more just distribution of wealth.

If everyone now accepts these facts, why go on pretending that anything else is possible? What sensible reason can there be for hesitation and delay?

Why should it be taking so long for central business districts to be opened for trading by people of all races? Will they do it or won't they, and how long must we wait to find out?

In all the important issues, government displays the same lack of clarity. Whether it be inept or deliberate does not make any difference to the disastrous end result.

Dr Viljoen succeeded, in one short statement, in inflaming the populations of two Transvaal townships, Ekangala and Soshanguve. Soshanguve is a township outside the prescribed area of Pretoria which was established to accommodate that part of the non-Tswana population of Pretoria which has urban rights. Ekangala

is a new township, very well planned, a model of pleasant new town development in many ways, 20kms north of Bronkhorstspuit. Only people with urban rights on the East Rand qualify to live there. Part of the township is set aside for occupation by Ndebele people, the rest for other language groups. Dr Viljoen recently announced that the whole of Ekangala is to be incorporated into KwaNdebele which is soon to become independent. The people of Soshanguve immediately had cause to believe persistent rumours that their township is to be incorporated into Bophuthatswana.

How can government possibly plan to relocate thousands of South African citizens within the borders of what is, according to their own laws, a foreign country?

What is the difference between citizenship and nationality? The government has been making vague noises about this since before Ciskei independence in 1981. They should not be surprised that people regard recent government talk about a review of citizenship laws with the utmost cynicism.

At this conference we will be considering the question whether Bophuthatswana's Bill of Rights has any value whatsoever. The more than a million non-Tswana South African citizens who suddenly found themselves resident within the borders of a foreign country at independence in 1977 are victimised at every turn. They often don't get pensions, or permanent residence permits, or trading licences, or work seekers registration. They are labelled 'squatters' by the Bophuthatswana government, and the South African government has apparently washed its hands of them. There has been talk of inter-government negotiations for years. Nothing happens. Many of these people are being subjected to the most brutal repression by the Bophuthatswana police and the Bill of Rights does not seem to offer any protection.

What price a Bill of Rights guaranteeing freedom of assembly when the Bophuthatswana government last year prohibited all meetings of more than 20 people unless the permission of the Minister is obtained for a larger meeting to be held?

Reform

There is no doubt that the sudden enthusiasm for reform is a result of increasing pressure from the black majority inside South Africa as well as from the western democracies together with the economic crisis into which we have been brought by many different factors, not the least of which has been profligate spending entailed in the attempt to bring to fruition the policy of apartheid.

The dictates of Afrikaner nationalism are no longer a priority. The preservation of the capitalist system is the overlying concern, now enshrined in our constitution. But you cannot preserve capitalism by continuing to exploit the black majority and continuing to deny them all the basic individual freedoms which capitalism claims to protect.

So we suddenly see the business sector in South Africa urging government to reform and to what seem to be quite radical changes in the ordering of society. Where were they during all those years when one apartheid law after another was placed on the statute book? Their silence was deafening.

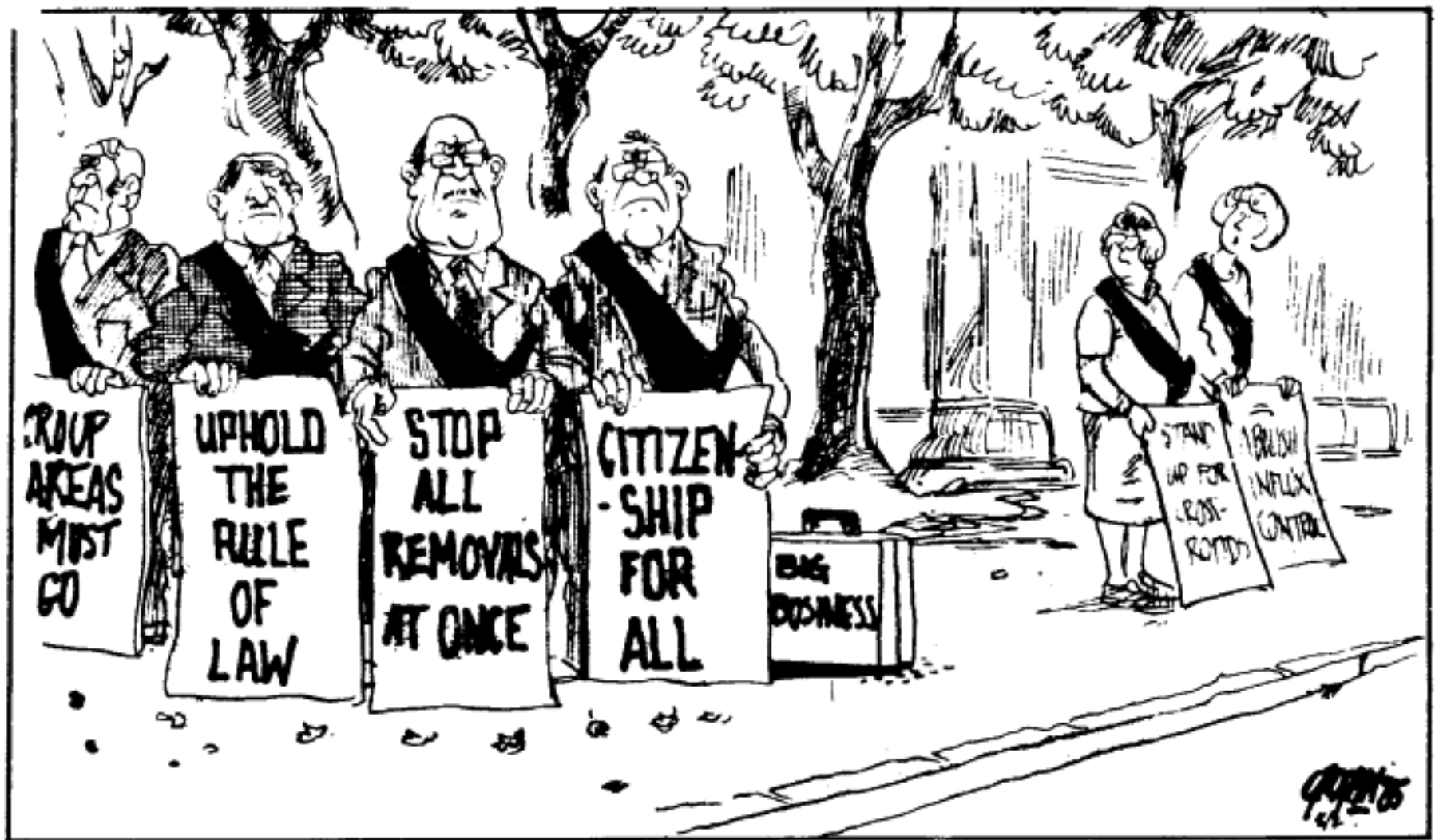


photo: Cape Times

"Good heavens! Where've they been for the past thirty years?"

When did they speak out against migrant labour, the pass laws, the Group Areas Act, removals, denationalisation, race classification? We know when they spoke out — when the disinvestment lobby began getting somewhere, the US legislation embodying economic sanctions of one kind or another suddenly became a real possibility, when black workers got organised and began making demands backed by united action and the power to strike effectively.

We welcome the claims made by employer's organisations in their memorandum to Senator Kennedy in January this year. The Chambers and Federations of employers concerned represent more than 80% of the employment strength of this country. They have been urged over and over again for the past 37 years to use their undoubted power to persuade government to stop removals, to remove influx control, to retreat from apartheid. They are doing so now, at last, and we must be thankful for it. They must be held to the commitments they made to Senator Kennedy and to all of us. I quote:

'In the national interest they are committed to an on-going programme of legislative reform to give effect to the following goals:

- meaningful political participation to blacks
- full participation in a private enterprise economy for all South Africans regardless of race, colour, sex or creed
- common loyalty to the country in all South Africans through a universal citizenship
- the development of a free and independent trade union movement
- the administration of justice as safe-guarded by the Courts
- an end to the forceful removal of people.'

Will they hold to those commitments if the threat of disinvestment and divestment is removed? They must prove to us that they would do so.

I am sure that most members of the Black Sash would agree with me in saying that nothing must be done which will cause one more person to lose a job. There is no social security in this country, no safety net to rescue the starving except what can be inadequately provided by voluntary welfare organisations. We sit in the advice offices all day long, faced with people who literally do not know where the next meal is to come from and we will not do one thing to make that situation worse.

But, we have some questions to ask of the business community here — both South African and foreign businessmen. The unemployment which exists on so large a scale now in this country is not a consequence of

The unemployment which exists on so large a scale now in this country is not a consequence of disinvestment, or economic sanctions. They have not yet been imposed.

disinvestment, divestment or economic sanctions. They have not yet been imposed. We ask those who are most audible in their criticisms of the disinvestment and divestment lobby overseas:

- How many jobs have you destroyed in the last five years because you have mechanised?
- Did you worry about unemployment when you merged and relocated and rationalised your operations?
- What have you done about the growing monopolistic control over industry and commerce, about price fixing, about destruction of competition, about squeezing out the small man?
- Have we heard your voices raised about the new Regulations relating to the retailing of coal which will destroy the small traders, or about the monopolistic controls over road transportation

which prevent the self-employed driver from finding his survival?

As you move into agri-business producing what, I am told, are called in America 'non-consumptives' — that which is not food — have you ever wondered about the one and a quarter million people who were dispossessed from South African farms in the years between 1960 and 1980? Do you know what happened to them in the resettlement camps where they were dumped? They are not part of the urban middle class in which your interest has been invested since 1976.

We sit in the advice offices all day long, faced with people who literally do not know where the next meal is to come from and we will not do one thing to make that situation worse.

You have told us that you are totally opposed to disinvestment and to divestment because it will cause increased unemployment here in South Africa.

Then you must answer us as to why South African businesses have become multinational? Why are you investing in Massachusetts and Britain and elsewhere? How many jobs could you have created here by bringing those investments back home?

Is it true that Anglo American is the second largest foreign investor in the United States?

Is it true that a major foreign company recently announced a R40-million investment in a new plant in South Africa which will not create one single new job, and is it true that in the same week that company was laying off 460 workers for a period of eight weeks?

These are, no doubt, naive questions but we are entitled to honest factual answers. You are presenting to us an apocalyptic vision of the consequences of disinvestment and divestment. We are entitled to ask you just where your investment is and what your investment is doing. You must start being honest with us. We have to be persuaded that your operations really do create jobs, really do spread the profits of capitalism through the whole society.

The evidence is not in your favour. The Reserves policy upon which the sophisticated political structures for apartheid are based were created by you in the past in a deliberate programme designed to ensure a plentiful supply of cheap labour. The migrant labour policies of succeeding governments were merely a development of your model created to maximise profits on the mines.

During the boom years apartheid was entrenched and refined and because it was in the interests of profits, you did not speak out against the manifold injustices and increasing poverty and misery.

Much more recently your free enterprise/home ownership model has furthered the government's urban preference policies which are squeezing out the poor and less well paid because the struggle to find accommodation is now a winner take all struggle for privilege and preference available only to those who can pay the inflated costs of residence in the confined, limited geographical borders of black townships. All this is contributing to the great fortified wall which has been erected between the urban insiders and the poverty-stricken outsiders.

Were you ignorant or naïve when you proclaimed to Senator Kennedy that you have been in the forefront in successfully urging the South African government to make meaningful policy changes especially in the following areas:

opening up housing to black private ownership and thus effectively reversing the use of black urban housing shortages as a form of influx control.

Have you heard of the August 26 1983 amendment to Section 10 which made the housing shortage a more stringent influx control tool than it has ever been before?

You were told about it but we never heard you complain.

You owe us answers to these questions and you should be aware that if you fail to answer, not only in the things that you say at Carlton Hotel banquets, but in what you do in your business enterprises, the future will condemn you. You will be judged if you cannot provide much more concrete evidence that free enterprise really does mean more freedom, more well-being, more peace with justice than any other economic system devised by man.

My last question is addressed both to you and to the State President.

What do you mean by 'meaningful political participation by blacks?' Meaningful political participation means 'one person, one vote' no more and no less. After accepting that principle one can start negotiating constitutional structures to protect the liberty and security of individuals.

Is this what you mean?

If you do not mean that we are all doomed. The demand in black communities has gone beyond any tinkering around the edges of local government, educational systems, housing policies. It is a demand for liberation. Only if government is responsible to the whole people will all the injustices in welfare, pensions, housing, ur-

The demand in black communities has gone beyond any tinkering around the edges of local government, educational systems, housing policies. It is a demand for liberation. Only if government is responsible to the whole people will all the injustices in welfare, pensions, housing, urbanisation, employment policies fall away.

banisation, employment policies fall away.

Peace with justice is only ever achieved in the tension held between conflicting interests. Are you prepared to risk everything to be a partner in that creative tension? Or will you wait to be destroyed because you have never been able to show that you mean what you say?

Meanwhile the rest of us have to get on with doing what we have to do.

We in the Black Sash have always been concerned with the victims, the excluded, the poor, the dispossessed. Our task is to find the non-violent ways in which power can be transferred to the powerless — not in any desire for the defeat or subjugation of the presently powerful, but in the true longing for a society in which equal distribution of powers will lead to peace and justice preserved in that creative tension which exists between conflicting interests of equal strength.

Port Elizabeth, March 14 1985

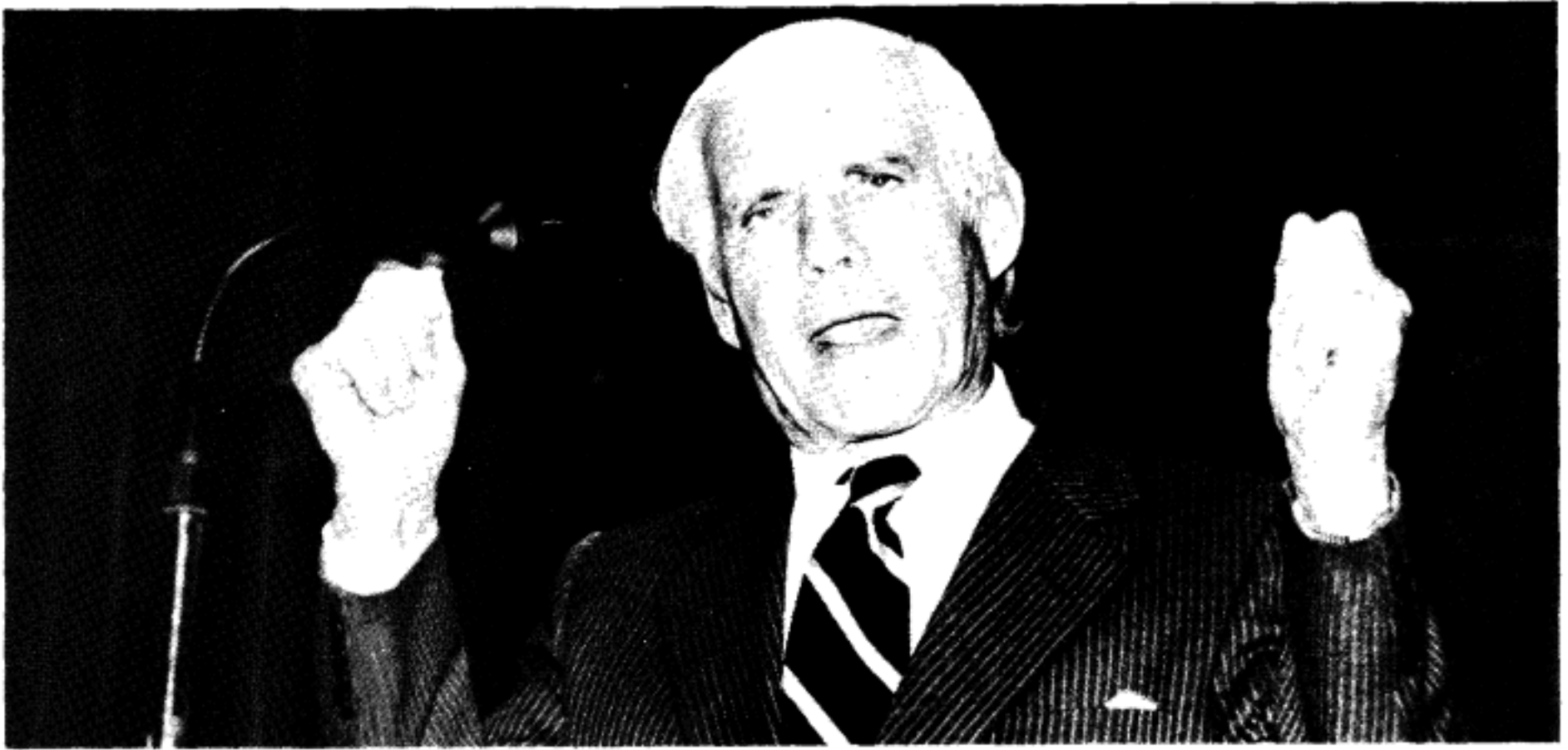


photo: Gill de Vlieg

Opening address by Sir Richard Luyt at the national conference of the Black Sash in Port Elizabeth on March 14, 1985

End conscription call from Luyt

Thanks for the privilege, indeed the honour, of being invited to deliver this address at the opening of the 1985 annual conference of the Black Sash. In recognizing this honour I should emphasise that I have not accepted it on behalf of any organization or institution. I am here tonight just as Richard Luyt, speaking for myself only, even if drawing on experience with various bodies, and even being still closely involved with some of them.

Congratulations on being 30 years old this year and on 30 years of courageous, dedicated effort and achievement, in the ever-continuing struggle for a more just and peaceful way of life in our country.

I wasn't in South Africa when the Sash was born but I read and heard of it frequently and gratefully as I watched and discussed from afar South Africa's agonies, so often self-inflicted. As an increasingly senior colonial administrator, particularly in the sixties (possessed of ministerial responsibility for internal security and the Police Force in Northern Rhodesia 1962-64, and then of overall responsibility when governor of British Guiana, for the peace and progress of that multi-racial and turbulent territory 1964-66).

I wasn't always so sure that I welcomed seeing pictures of your silent standings with placards of protest, appeal or uncomfortable reminder. Pictures of such vigils went round the world, and while such stances elsewhere may not have been caused by Sash initiative, the example here in South Africa certainly put a stamp of respectability on similar activity elsewhere.

And don't think that authorities anywhere are unaffected by such vigils. As a colonial Governor I would pretend I didn't really notice them, or that I was more amused than offended, but I was never happy to note the influence on others or to contemplate the strength of feeling and character that motivated the protesters. I always felt easier and less under pressure when not being picketed in this way.

The presentation, in Section 3 of the Black Sash constitution, of the aims and objects of the organization, starts with the inspiring words 'To promote justice . . .'. What finer aim, particularly in South Africa, could there be — to do what is right, what is fair, what is just? Tonight, ever mindful of your primary aim, I am going to speak mainly on the need, the vital need, for an end, an early end, to compulsory military service in our country. This subject in its many and far-reaching ramifications for those who must serve, and indeed for the rest of society, impacts so strongly on what is fair and just that I am not surprised to know that an organization whose basic aim is 'to promote justice' should have been the first national body to call, by resolution of your 1983 national conference, for an end to conscription for military service.

And perhaps it is a convenient coincidence that 1985 be the International Year of Youth, in which it is specially appropriate to be considering something so tremendously important to young lives, even though it is of course also important to all of us.

At the outset I should perhaps make clear from what

point of view I will be urging the abandonment in South Africa of conscription. It will help you the better to put my arguments in perspective and to judge them. Let me start by emphasizing that I am not a pacifist in the sense of believing that being part of a military machine that takes life cannot be justified. I have respect for many pacifists but their standpoint is not mine. Not only did I voluntarily serve as a fighting soldier for five years of World War 2, but I had earlier while a student at the University of Cape Town, with the Nazi menace on the horizon, opted for military training, and I received it.

Furthermore, I had cause to be grateful during that war for the intensive cadet training that I had earlier been given at school at Bishops. During the war I loathed and was terrified by the actual fighting, but there was also much that was fine in my military experience and which I recall with gratitude.

Later, as governor of a colony I used military force to defend my borders when invaded from without and also to assist the civil power within when internal insurrection seemed likely to take over. I was exceedingly grateful for the availability of the battalions.

Clearly, then, I am not speaking as a pacifist. Military force has a place in the affairs of men and to me the reality is to recognise that fact. I speak therefore as one with such recognition and what I am considering tonight is the shape that military force should take and the justification for its existence.

I am not surprised to know that an organization whose basic aim is 'to promote justice' should have been the first national body to call, by resolution of your 1983 National Conference, for an end to conscription for military service.

But while the existence of the military is necessary it is vital always to bear in mind that it is no more than a shield to safeguard, or permit the development of, all that is good and important in the strivings of men, including things of the spirit, of the intellect, things which promote human rights including safety of the person and property, the pursuit of well-being, access to justice and the exercise of conscience. The military has a role to play, a purpose to fulfil for the safety and benefit of all people in the country that it serves. That is its role. The military is not an end unto itself with ambitions of power or influence in other spheres, and as a one-time trained soldier I hope I have always recognized this. All soldiers should.

There are other principles that underpin my attitude towards conscription for military service. These are of general, and not merely South African, application although you are free to — and no doubt will — apply them to our local situation as I describe them. But weigh them also for their general validity.

Firstly, I accept that a country has a right to possess security forces in quantity and training sufficient to defend itself against external aggression and to support the police in emergency situations in the maintenance of internal order; of course I also see it as the concomitant duty of a country's government to adopt policies which aim at justice and fairness for all, internally and externally, and thereby minimise the chances of violent conflict and the need to use its military forces.

Furthermore, those military forces while justifiable, should desirably be volunteer-based and not dependent on conscription.

Secondly, it is unacceptable to me for a government not based on the choice or approval of the majority of the people, in other words a minority government, to compel people, even those who do have a vote, to become part of the military forces of the country. I am not, in stating this principle, insisting that before conscription of all or part of the people is acceptable, there must necessarily be a government chosen on a 'one man one vote' common franchise system. In populations made up of diverse ethnic groups there are a number of ways, federal and other, by which a government can be chosen with all participating and with majority support.

And now a temporary diversion from my list of principles! I contended, without qualification, that even those who *do* have a say in the choice of a minority government should not be forced into compulsory military service? What are my arguments in support of this? Because in the circumstances of minority government,

- (a) it is doubly important that the merit and morality of what a minority government stands for should be good enough to attract volunteers to man its security forces; if the merit and morality cannot attract volunteer support from all the populace the policies and, indeed, the minority government itself do not deserve to survive; and
- (b) it is inevitable that significant, possibly substantial, numbers of the minority governing group do not approve of the government's philosophy towards the majority and should not be compelled, as sometimes happens, to impose this philosophy where it is not welcome, by force of arms; and
- (c) it is wrong for a government not based on the choice or approval of the majority of the people to spend vast sums of money, drawn from all taxpayers, into putting all the young men of a minority group or groups only under military training and under arms; and
- (d) it is highly likely to be resented by the majority group or groups and thus to be damaging to race relations; and
- (e) **it is reinforcing a racial pattern in the military forces which is unhealthy for the future** (more of this anon).

Thirdly, I concede that there can be circumstances where compulsory military service is justified, usually in a homogeneous or near-homogeneous society, and certainly only where all citizens have a hand in choosing or approving their government, where there is some potential danger and where alternative forms of national service are reasonably available (and this is very important) to those who cannot accept being part of the military

In the circumstances of minority government it is doubly important that the merit and morality of what it stands for should be good enough to attract volunteers.

machine on valid grounds of conscience or religion. But in my view the reasons for conscription and its methods of application need to be very sound and widely accepted before it can be justified. Conscription creates

painful moral dilemmas: it is expensive; it is unpopular; it disrupts the economic and social life of individuals and of the community and it doesn't provide the most efficient military force; perhaps worst of all it generates a militaristic attitude and atmosphere in society which is not conducive to a constructive and peaceful approach to the settlement of problems.

Of course, there are certain benefits to be derived from military training, and thus from conscription. Some of the discipline is healthy; there is physical fitness and bearing, team spirit, camaraderie and loyalty. But these can be obtained outside of compulsory military service and without its disadvantages.

A fourth and final principle underlying my attitude towards conscription is that the military force of a country should be drawn from all the communities or ethnic groups that make up the total population, and that this can and should be achieved on the basis of volunteers. Indeed, special care should be taken at all times to ensure that the security forces of a country are reflective in their composition of all sections of the total populace; otherwise it is difficult to engender and maintain confidence in them in the public mind and heart. In British Guiana I had great problems in this regard, in that the security forces, although based on volunteers, were not healthily balanced racially.

The ethnic group that predominated in both Police and Army was reluctant to allow me as governor to change things — the situation was traditional and entrenched — and other groups remained embittered and distrustful. It was ultimately only with the help of the much respected International Commission of Jurists as advisers that change became possible. The lesson is that if the ethnic composition of the security forces goes askew — and this almost certainly happens with the conscription of one group and not of others — the forces themselves lack general public support and are not ideally manned to perform all their tasks. Nor is it easy in any short or even medium period to correct a distorted position. This fourth principle is to me so strong an argument as to be virtually decisive on its own. It also precludes a fully satisfactory answer being found in remedial patchwork to our present policies and legislation.

I concede that compulsory military service is sometimes justified but only when all citizens have a hand in choosing their government.

Perhaps I should mention here that I see the ideal military force to consist of a substantial element of professionals, ie career soldiers who of course volunteered to be such, supported by part-time volunteer national servicemen, to make up whatever total numbers are required at any time; and both sections of this ideal milit-

Conscription creates painful moral dilemmas: it is expensive, it is unpopular, it disrupts the economic and social life of individuals and of the community and it doesn't provide the most efficient military force. Perhaps worst of all it generates a militaristic attitude and atmosphere in society which is not conducive to a constructive and peaceful approach to the settlement of problems.



Sir Richard Luyt chats to Sheena Duncan, right, while Zoë Riordan looks on photo: Glenda Webster

ary force should reflect the ethnic composition of the total populace, or at least be moving purposefully towards such reflection.

These are my concepts in broad. I must now apply them to South Africa. I have recognized the right of a government to have military forces strong and competent enough to defend its country and to assist in maintaining order internally during crises. The respected publication of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance*, tells us in its 1984/85 issue that South Africa currently has an army of approximately 67 000 persons, an airforce of 10 000 and a navy of 6 000. Our airforce and navy are already predominantly made up of professionals plus a minority of conscripts, but the army has 50 000 conscripts, or 74 percent of its total strength; and of course these conscripts are all whites. If the professional element in our army were to be increased, at the same time redressing the racial imbalance, and the reduced non-professional requirements were to be converted from white conscripts to volunteers of all race groups, we would in nearly all respects be on a healthier way forward and, in particular, be relieved of the great conscription incubus.

A few months ago when the leader of the NRP and I appeared together on the radio programme 'Microphone In' on this same subject, I felt that he conceded most of my arguments against conscription, except that he feared there would be insufficient suitable volunteers to provide the necessary manpower for my kind of military force in South Africa. Assuming there are needed at most 40 000 volunteers (and I would hope it could soon be much less) from our total population of about 28 million, there must be something very wrong somewhere if this relatively modest number fails to offer themselves and if those offering are not suitable. Maybe it is the emoluments and conditions of service that need reviewing, but maybe it is public disapproval of the purposes for which our army is used, eg Namibia, and African townships, that would have to be given further consideration.

It can be argued, and often is, that our adverse education system, for blacks particularly, and our pressing demand in other sectors for schooled manpower, will make it impossible to find enough suitable volunteers for our military forces. Against this however, can be argued that an early ending to the Namibian problem — surely

mainly in our hands — and political moves to reduce internal unrest could reduce the need for our army to remain of the present size. And let us not forget the vast voluntary enlistment of blacks into the East and West African forces during World War 2, and what efficient and reliable soldiers they became even with modest education.

Yet while there *are* arguments against ending white conscription soon which do indeed need to be met, as I believe they can be, they all seem to be given a totally wrong position in the importance ratings compared with what conscription of whites deserves and requires. This

The military force of a country should be drawn from all the communities or ethnic groups that make up the total population, and this can and should be achieved on the basis of volunteers.

conscription, with exemption only for religious objectors is, in our troubled and highly contentious South Africa, a denial to those conscripted of the right to exercise freedom of conscience as to whether or not to serve in the SADF. And this in a society where the contentious issues, in which our forces get involved often go to the very roots of a man's moral standards of life. A draconian prison sentence follows if he refuses to serve and cannot establish an acceptable religious objection, and how agonised are the many who decide that military service is at least less dreadful than six years in prison! Is it surprising that one sees so much manoeuvring among conscripts for soft or non-combatant jobs?

And remember that South Africa went through two world wars without conscription, when the views and feelings of our many dissidents were respected, and when the military forces relied for their successful volunteer support on the worthiness of the cause in which they were campaigning. What conclusions must one draw from this? And can our apartheid way of life, our policy towards Namibia, be maintained only by employing the maximum white military enforcement possible? If this is so, our future is indeed bleak.

If not so, why is whites only conscription with all its controversy at home and its adverse image abroad maintained? What other reasons can there be? Think of the price. We have lost some thousands of young white South Africans, often of our best, who have on grounds of principle emigrated rather than serve in the SADF in

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our circumstances. There are others failing to report for service: there are others whose service is grudging, resentful and thus surely unsatisfactory. And there is the well-known question of the position of the games-playing serviceman compared with the different treatment of the non-games player. I never cease to be amazed at the ease with which talented sportsmen obtain postings where sports opportunities are best and where sporting

appearances seldom seem to be interrupted by such matters as service on a distant border.

The increasing involvement of the army and thus of national servicemen in security duties in African townships is further cause for anxiety. These duties often stem from the implementation of highly controversial policies, of which the very morality is questioned by many. Men should not be forced to be thus involved. Ponder also the implications where young whites and blacks have been happily and constructively at school or university together in well earned friendship, and later the one, armed, uniformed and representing unpopular policy and authority, having to invade the township of the other on compulsory military duty.

I have said nothing of the possible extension of conscription to the coloured and Indian groups. I hope it never happens but logically, those groups being now possessed of a vote and in Parliament, it should if one takes a cue from the policy towards whites. Is our government going to turn a blind eye to principle and going to duck or postpone the issue because of its uncomfortable implications? And indeed the implications are highly uncomfortable in the potential damage to relations between blacks and the coloured and Indian people, and also in the potential resistance of coloureds and Indians to being called up. Is it not so much simpler to abandon conscription for all and to rely on volunteers from all ethnic groups?

Is hesitance to do this based on doubt of the loyalty and support of many of our people? It is on record that in 1977 the then Minister of Defence argued in Parliament that the SADF 'cannot distribute arms on a very large scale to blacks without the necessary control measures'.

A way of life which all our races find worthy of support by arms or otherwise, must be our aim. Conscription has no role in this. It must be achieved voluntarily, out of conviction that all is well fundamentally in South Africa.

This attitude has roots far into our history, but if it still exists in 1985 must South Africans in general and our government in particular not consider why this is so and effect change? A way of life which all our races find worthy of support by arms or otherwise, must be our aim. Again, conscription has no role in this. It must be achieved voluntarily, out of conviction that all is well fundamentally in South Africa.

Am I being excessively idealistic and impractical? I believe not and I speak as a one-time senior soldier and administrator. *The continuance of conscription will generate greater problems than its abandonment.* It is, of course, true that for some people the opportunity to perform military service, even when conscripted, is an honour and a demonstration of patriotism; for others it poses deep moral dilemmas, desperate issues of conscience and ghastly alternative choices. To the former I would say the end of conscription opens the way to demonstrate patriotism even more strongly as a volunteer; for the latter only the end of conscription can remove their agony.

I know that large numbers of white South Africans never stop to question the rightfulness of our conscrip-

tion. I plead to them to do so, and to think deeply on the subject. It demands and deserves the deepest thought. I plead to all of you in the audience to weigh such issues very carefully; also to those to whom the media (perhaps that will be mainly here in Port Elizabeth) carry my arguments. These arguments have tried to avoid being emotional or selfish, but directed at the greater interest both of the individual and of South Africa.

Before leaving this subject of conscription I must pay tribute not only to the Black Sash for its role in pressing for its end, but also to the Conscientious Objector Support Group and to those who work in the End Conscription Campaign, both of whom help many towards a better understanding of the issues involved, and both of whom are responsible for splendid publications. I commend these to you.

I had thought of touching also on some other important issues in our South African lives, such as Namibia and education. The former links with my earlier career interest, and indeed the basis on which South Africa assumed its role as mandatory power and the extent to which it has been loyal to that basis over the long years, are fascinating and important to consider, as also is the present critical situation. And education (the core of my later career) with the current and officially adopted aim of equal opportunities for education, including equal standards in education for every inhabitant, being the purposeful endeavour of the state, is a subject requiring constant vigilance and attention. But there is no time for exploration of these things now, even though I hope you will, as part of the 'promotion of justice' by the Sash, keep your minds on them.

If tonight I have done no more than to add weight to

the Black Sash's call for an end to conscription, the evening will for me have been tremendously well spent.

And may you have a wonderful, inspiring and achieving conference in the days ahead.

Malan reacts to Luyt talk

PRETORIA — The Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, said yesterday that calls for an end to compulsory military conscription in South Africa should be addressed to the government commission studying the matter.

Reacting to an anti-draft speech made by Sir Richard Luyt, a former principal of the University of Cape Town, in Port Elizabeth last week, General Malan said: 'It is a pity that he chose to air his theories to the Black Sash and not to the (Geldenhuys) committee.'

General Malan said Sir Richard, himself a soldier of World War II, would be formally invited to express his views on conscription.

"I am convinced that the comparison made between the two previous world wars and the terrorist campaign on home ground could lead to many stimulating thoughts," the minister said, adding, however, that any views expressed should be "purely military and not have a political goal". Sapa (Cape Times, March 22, '85)

Below:
Members of the Black Sash at the opening of their conference in Port Elizabeth, March '85

photo: Gill de Vlieg



Jill Wentzel

JILL WENTZEL

During her stint as editor of *SASH* Jill Wentzel raised it to a new level of excellence, interest and stimulation. She produced a number of issues on special subjects which were a mine of information, and took pleasure in the publication of articles which were thought-provoking and sometimes controversial.

Her editorials, too, reflected her fascinatingly original mind and were always beautifully written. We shall miss her freshness of approach and her enthusiasm for what she was doing and thinking, and we are deeply indebted to her for her integrity and her courage.

She worked very hard indeed, collecting contributions and articles for *SASH* which made each issue rewarding and satisfying to read. People may not always have agreed with everything she said. That is the penalty of creative thinking. But all will concede that *SASH* magazine is a superior product as a result of her efforts.

The combination of Jill Wentzel and Joyce Brown, who has been and still is responsible for the layout and presentation, was a winning one and we are exceedingly grateful to both of them. We wish Jill luck in her new project and hope and expect that she will not be entirely lost to us.

Joyce Harris





A South African policeman keeps an eye on a power-saluting Swapo supporter

photo: Rand Daily Mail

When they visited Namibia for two weeks last September Di BISHOP and MOLLY BLACKBURN met a cross section of people whom they believed to be among the best informed in the territory. Here are their impressions which were presented to the Black Sash National Conference in Port Elizabeth in March, 1985.

South Africa in Namibia

We had both been on earlier SADF tours to the Northern Area and Di had previously been on a private fact-finding visit to Windhoek and Walvis Bay.

Our September visit included a 4 000 km tour by car during which we spent a few days at a mission station about 30 km from the Angolan border. We entered the war-zone at Oshivelo where there is a police post. We were required to state our

names and destination and this information was checked again when we left. No permit was required to enter the area and we travelled unhindered in Ovambo.

From March 11, '85 permits will be required, the aim of which 'is first and foremost to ensure the safety of the public' according to Lt General A J C Gouws, head of the SWA/Namibian police.

- The might and degree of en-

trenchment of the SA military machine in Namibia is an indisputable fact.

In Ovambo we were constantly aware of being in the 'operational area' or war-zone. The indigenous growth has been cleared for \pm 50 metres away from the sides of the roads. There are massive army and airforce installations in the area along with many Koevoet (the SA Police special counter-insurgency

unit) camps in the villages near Oshakati, Ongwidiva and Ondangua. We observed fighter planes flying north towards Angola and heard gun-fire at night. (We were told that this was a nightly occurrence staged for the purpose of re-assuring whites in the area). Armoured personnel carriers, tanks and other military vehicles were everywhere. Residential areas were wired off. The 'white area' of Oshakati is surrounded by a high double row of barbed wire fencing. Between the fencing the ground is burnt. Every vehicle entering the area is searched and armed guards record details of drivers. Bomb-shelters are much in evidence in the grounds of white schools and the homes of whites — not so in the black schools and black areas, however.

- However, the SADF campaign to 'win the hearts and minds of people' has clearly not succeeded. South Africa is seen to be a foreign, occupying force. It was made clear to us that no bodies or authorities elected on an ethnic basis will ever have the support of the majority of the people. The lack of civic authority in the war-zone has led to a situation bordering on anarchy.

The vast majority of people support Swapo. It was often mentioned that not everyone who supports Swapo does so because of a commitment to the Swapo manifesto, but because Swapo symbolizes *freedom* from the current oppression.

The generalized marxist label attached to Swapo is false. The majority are Christians belonging to the Lutheran, Catholic and Anglican churches. The total population of Namibia is one million of whom half are Ovambo-speaking. Membership of the ELOK (Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Ovambo Kavango) church totals some 300 000. We understand that all Swapo camps have chaplains.

- As in all wars, atrocities have been committed by both sides. But a hatred of South Africa has been built up as a result of the imposition for several years of a dusk-to-dawn curfew in the war-zone with a shoot-on-sight instruction after curfew, the presence of the despised Koevoet, and the now documented evidence of a number of atrocities perpetrated by men in SA uniform.

Wide powers of detention are exercised in terms of the Terrorism Act (still in operation in Namibia)

and Proclamations AG9 and AG26. There are no public records of detentions and no standing orders or regulations controlling the way and conditions in which people are held. It is not known how many people are currently in detention in Namibia. There is ongoing harassment of the civilian population, eg the army conducted a Sunday round-up of 800 civilians on their way to church (March 1984) during which people were individually photographed and questioned as to who they would vote for in an election. An official complaint was lodged which elicited the response that such actions were designed to prevent or suppress terrorism.

- Many people expressed immense fear and suspicion of each other. Several emphasized that no one trusts anyone else, not even his brother.

- Our most overriding impression was one of tired, worried people who feel abandoned and expendable.

ble. Disillusioned, they see an end to the war and a free Namibia as remote possibilities. They are equally disillusioned with the international — and particularly American — involvement in Namibia.

We were left with no doubt as to where the responsibility lay for achieving an end to the war and setting the country on the long hard road to building a free independent Namibia. South Africa must bear a major portion of the responsibility for what has happened in Namibia. It is in the interest of every South African and every Namibian that South Africa stops the 18 year old war, ends its occupation of Namibia and that Resolution 435 (viz annexure A, page 16) be implemented without further delay. We believe that the attainment of a just peace in Namibia could become a reality if every organisation — including the Black Sash — placed the attainment thereof high on its agenda in 1985.



Di and Brian Bishop with Mrs Elizabeth Malima, 93, mother of SWAPO founder Herman Toivo ja Toivo, in her Katutura township.

photo: Tony Weaver, RDM

Significant events in Namibia 1984 - 1985

On January 31, 84 Mr P W Botha stated in Parliament that SA could not be 'expected to continue to bear the heavy burden of SWA . . .' (*Hansard Col 9913*)

In the wake of a failed attempt to establish a State Council, the Multi-Party Conference (MPC) was established. The six-member MPC met Mr P W Botha in Cape Town in February and were told that it would be necessary to scrap Namibia's present constitution, ie AG8 of 1980 on which the 10 ethnic second tier government rests, in order to draw up a new constitution (*Cape Times Feb 4, 1984*).

Foundation member of Swapo, Mr Andimba Toivo Ja Toivo was released after spending 16 years on Robben Island.

Talks between Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr Pik Botha, and US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Dr Chester Crocker continued throughout the year. At least one such meeting was attended by Mr Ja Toivo. The MPLA government in Luanda has accepted the principle of Cuban troop withdrawal.

South African plans for establishing a pre-independence interim government in Namibia (possibly by June 1985) are apparently well-advanced. Part of the plan (not confirmed by SA) is that the post of Administrator-General will be down-graded and a more junior official will be sent to oversee SA interests. Dr W van Niekerk will be recalled (to become the new Minister of Health and Welfare in SA?), and all key posts (except Defence and Foreign Affairs) will be taken over by the interim government (*Cape Times Jan 14, 85*).

April — three Namibian bishops — Bishop K Dumeni (Lutheran), Bishop J Kauluma (Anglican) and Bishop B Haushiku (Catholic) — brought an application to court on behalf of 37 Cassinga prisoners held at the Mariental detention camp South of Windhoek. The application called for cause to be shown why the prisoners should not be released forthwith from custody. They had been held since 1978 after what they called 'unlawful abductions' from Cassinga, a refugee camp in Southern Angola.

The Minister of Justice, Mr K Coetzee, effectively banned the court case by issuing a certificate under an obscure section of the Defence Act. He also ordered that no appeal could be made to any court of law against the certificate. A debate in Parliament on the plight of the detainees was ruled inadmissible on May 18, 84 because 'the matter was sub-judice'. This action elicited national and international condemnation.

May — Dr W van Niekerk announced that 54 of the 146 detainees would be released. All but 75 of the detainees were released later in May. The rest were released on Oct 18 (*Windhoek Observer*)

Thirty-six of the released detainees are now suing the Minister of Defence and the Administrator-General for a total in excess of R1m for alleged unlawful detention and assault.

May — Namibian Independence talks took place in Lusaka between Swapo and a SA delegation headed by the Administrator-General, Dr W van Niekerk.

Mr Anton Lubowski became the first 'white Namibian' to publicly declare his allegiance to Swapo.

June — 37 people — including members of Swapo were detained under AG9 on Catholic Church property on the eve of Mr P W Botha's audience with the Pope.

The horrors of the war continued throughout the year

- * Two US diplomats lost their lives when a bomb exploded at the Oshakati garage where they had stopped for petrol. A bomb explosion in the crowded Ondangua Post Office claimed four lives, and two were lost in an explosion in an Oshakati shop. (*Windhoek Observer Jan 5*.)
- * A high-level Anglican Church delegation, sent to Namibia by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Runcie in March reported that people in the north lived in a 'state of perpetual fear and suspicion, and they fear the army and Koevoet far more than they fear Swapo'. (*Cape Times March 5*)
- * The SA Catholic Bishops' Conference records with concern the militarization of Namibia and atrocities committed by troops, including Koevoet.
- * In spite of wide-spread resistance to the idea, all men between the ages of 17 and 55 are being registered. Compulsory universal military conscription has existed in Namibia since 1980.
- * The Namibian Bar Council make serious allegations about actions and methods used by Koevoet (*Argus June 25, '84*) and Minister of Law and Order, Mr L le Grange responds by launching an unbridled attack on the Bar Council and the Press. He strongly defends Koevoet actions. (*Cape Times June 26*).
- * The SA government pays out R88 000 to victims of the Koevoet unit for the first time ever just prior to the trial of Archbishop Hurley who was alleged to have made allegations of misconduct by Koevoet. (*Cape Times Jan 29*)
- * No action has as yet been taken against the four non-commissioned officers of Koevoet who were warned as possible accused following the death in detention of a school teacher, Mr J Hamukwayo.

On December 14, the Minister of Police and SWA government failed in their application for leave to appeal against the Windhoek supreme court finding in October 1982 that Mr J Kakuva had 'died of injuries while in police custody'. Mr Justice Mouton's findings in the judgement were significant in that it was the first time — in either Namibia or South Africa — that a court had found that a person had died of injuries while in detention.

- * An inquest court found that a member of the SADF was responsible for the burning to death of four members of a family in Kavango.
- * Two young boys were blown up by a landmine which they stepped on in the Ohongo area and two civilians were shot and killed by a police patrol unit who mistook them for insurgents. They were not held criminally liable for the deaths of these men.
- * At least 10 people — most of them members of the Anglican church — were detained by the SA security police in Ovambo on Jan 1 in terms of AG9. The Press were requested not to publish their names.
- * The death sentence imposed on ex-Koevoet member, Jonas Paulus (23 years), on Dec 6, '83 was upheld by the Appellate Division. Paulus was described during the course of his trial as a 'programmed killer'.
In his own evidence in mitigation of sentence, Paulus told the judge of his war experiences, of planes bombing settlements and of people in flames. He said his war was against Swapo and the MPLA. Evidence during his trial, of Koevoet fighters earning 'koppeld' (bounty) for Swapo guerillas killed, served to confirm widespread rumours of this nature (*Windhoek Observer* Sept 29)
- * Two soldiers of the SWA Territorial forces were each fined R50 for spit roasting a 63-year-old-civilian, Mr Ndaru Kapitango. His right arm was amputated as a result of the ordeal. Mr Kapitango is suing the Minister of Defence.

July — The Windhoek Observer was banned. It was well-known as one of the most ferocious opponents of apartheid. Unbanned in August it has continued to function without its political editor Gwen Lister.

Ms Lister has been subjected to on-going harassment. She now works as BBC correspondent in Windhoek. In December she was detained for three days and was due to be charged under the Official Secrets Act for illegally opening mail which was not addressed to her (*Cape Times* Dec 15,). When she was scheduled to appear in court, the prosecutor informed the presiding magistrate that charges would no longer be pressed.

The incident related to Ms Lister being sent a letter which was intended for the Postmaster-General in Windhoek. The letter, marked 'Top Secret', came from the Commissioner of Police in Pretoria requesting the Postmaster-General to intercept all mail addressed to and sent by Ms Lister 'in the interest of state security'.

September — Dr Jonas Savimbi of UNITA, attended the inauguration of Pres P W Botha in Cape Town.

October — with the increasing diplomatic confrontation over the Coventry Four, the SA Ambassador at the UN Security Council, Mr K Von Schirnding warned the world body that South Africa 'will withdraw our contribution to peace in Southern Africa' unless hostility towards SA stopped (*Cape Times* Oct 25)

October — Archbishop Denis Hurley pleaded 'not guilty' to a charge of contravening Sec 27 (b) of the 1958 Police Act after alleging that Koevoet had perpetrated atrocities.

The trial was due to proceed on February 18. Senior clergymen from overseas were to attend the trial and there was widespread support for the Archbishop from within and outside the Catholic Church. Charges against him were suddenly withdrawn on Feb 15.

The Afrikaans press has been particularly outspoken on the government's handling of the court action against the Archbishop. They have pointed out that the end of the case against the Archbishop has decidedly not closed the dossier on Koevoet and other allegations (*Cape Times* review of Afrikaans Press, March 5, 85)

PFP spokesman of Foreign Affairs, Mr Colin Eglin MP called on the Botha Administration to get out of Namibia without delay.

A huge military operation — Exercise Thunderchariot — took place in the Northern Cape in Sept and October, the provisional cost of which is R24 million (*Cape Times* Feb 13, 85)

Civilians in Ovambo fear that this exercise may be the forerunner to another raid through Ovambo into Angola

At a press briefing, Col Kleynhans, senior staff officer of the SWA Territorial Forces said that a cross-border attack on Swapo headquarters in Angola should not be ruled out (*Argus*, Dec 20)

From March this year the Northern Border of Namibia with Angola and Zambia and a large area of Namibia's eastern frontier with Botswana have been declared 'security areas'. Access will be prohibited unless a visitor has been issued with a permit by the police.

STATEMENT

The Black Sash reiterates its demand for:

- 1 **An end to the war and South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia;**
- 2 **The immediate implementation of UN Resolution 435;**
- 3 **The disbanding of the notorious paramilitary police task force Koevoet;**
- 4 **The release of all Namibian political prisoners and detainees**
- 5 **The abolition of the Terrorism Act and all Attorney General proclamations relating to security in Namibia.**

Annexure A

Resolution 435

Adopted by the Security Council at its 2087th meeting on September 29, 1978.

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolution 385 (1976) and 431 (1978), and 432 (1978)

Having considered the report submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 2 of resolution 431 (1978) (S/12827) and his explanatory statement made in the Security Council on September 29 1978 (S/12869),

Taking note also of the letter dated September 8 1978 from the President of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) addressed to the Secretary-General (S/12841),

Reaffirming the legal responsibility of the United Nations over Namibia,

1 Approves the report of the

Secretary-General (S/12827) for the implementation of the proposal for a settlement of the Namibian situation (S/12636) and his explanatory statement (S/12869)

2 Reiterates that its objective is the withdrawal of South Africa's illegal administration of Namibia and the transfer of power to the people of Namibia with the assistance of the United Nations in accordance with resolution 385 (1976);

3 Decides to establish under its authority a United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) in accordance with the abovementioned report of the Secretary-General for a period of up to 12 months in order to assist his Special Representative to carry out the mandate conferred upon him by paragraph 1 of Security Council resolution 431 (1978), namely, to ensure the early independence of Namibia through free and fair elections under the supervision and control of the Un-

ited Nations;

4 Welcomes SWAPO's preparedness to co-operate in the implementation of the Secretary-General's report, including its expressed readiness to sign and observe the cease-fire provisions as manifested in the letter from the President of SWAPO dated 8 September 1978 (S/12841);

5 Calls on South Africa forthwith to co-operate with the Secretary-General in the implementation of this resolution.

6 Declares that all unilateral measures taken by the illegal administration in Namibia in relation to the electoral process, including unilateral registration of voters, or transfer of power, in contravention of Security Council resolution 385 (1976), 431 (1978) and this resolution are null and void;

7 Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council not later than October 23 1978 on the implementation of this resolution.

In conclusion

The economy of Namibia is in a mess. The war itself costs over R1m per day, but the multiple government system has an even more devastating effect. In the first five years of having 10 different ethnic 'governments', state spending rose from 32,7% of Gross Domestic Product to 62%. The salaries alone of the vast number of civil servants exceeds the total tax income of Namibia.

There is a lesson for South Africa to be learned from this experience. The new SA Constitution of 'Own Affairs Governments' is based on the failed Namibian experiment. South Africa's economy is being crippled by ideological spending.

In an interesting review of Namibia published on Jan 7, Mr Tony Heard, editor of the *Cape Times*, refers to allegations of over-mining and corporate tax-dodging.

One cannot help wondering whether — if and when South Africa pulls out — it plans to leave a completely col-

lapsed economy, and every citizen armed in order to create another Matabeleland-like situation.



Tanks in the Namib desert

photo: Rand Daily Mail

Conference 1985 — for those who did not attend

The 1985 conference dealt with 40 papers in 22 hours over four days. What was it all about? And what were some of our achievements, resolutions and decisions?

Thursday afternoon — March 14

We started in silence for those who died in detention.

The first session dealt, in the main as it always does, with headquarters reports and our national business. (See page 29)

Glenda Glover put forward a suggestion that we need to widen our leadership. She said it ought to include more representation from other regions. And it should create space for inexperienced, would-be leaders to learn from their experienced colleagues.

Statements, Resolutions, Decisions

A press statement calling for the unconditional release of all detainees.

Agreement to increase the price of the magazine from R2,00 to R2,60

We agreed to think about solutions to this problem for next years' conference.



Glenda Glover

Thursday evening

The Port Elizabeth City Hall, 8pm

Sheena Duncan opened the conference with the presidential address (see page 1)

Sir Richard Luyt spoke next, giving his arguments for the need to abolish compulsory military service (see page 7)

Many of us stood in the foyer holding posters to demonstrate against the refusal of bail for awaiting trial prisoners.

Friday morning

We dealt with 14 reports, region by region, of general activity (see page 29) and advice office work (coming up next issue).

Miriam Hepner presented a paper in which Margo Mc Quirter describes procedures in the Johannesburg pass courts. A case is heard once every two or three minutes, 'with a great deal of confusion on prisoners' faces'.

Noel Robb told us about Cape Western's campaign on influx control. It will start with a meeting of all organisations concerned with the matter. From this a brainstrust will follow to consider what will happen if influx control is dropped.

A press statement on the need to improve the standard of interpretation in court.

Another press statement calling for free legal aid for the needy in both criminal and civil cases.

A press statement condemning Zac de Beer's call to scrap the minimum wage.



Miriam Hepner

Friday afternoon

We devoted most of the afternoon to descriptions of urban unrest, its causes and how the authorities have dealt with it.

Matthew Goniwe, chairman of Cradora, the Cradock Resident Association, told us about hardships and community resistance in Cradock's township. Matthew is now listed and may not be quoted.

Mkhuseli Jack, a youth leader of Peyco, the Port Elizabeth youth congress gave us some valuable insight into young peoples' anger and its causes, eg the new constitution and unemployment.

Michael Mjekula, from the Ministers Fraternal in Port Elizabeth spoke about black anger. He said that it was naive to think that revolution had not begun, but it was not too late to call the real leaders and talk to find a solution.



Michael Mjekula



Mkhuseli Jack

Our own members, Merle Beetge, Annica van Gylswyk, Gill de Vlieg, Margaret Barker, Gus Macdonald and Barbara Creecy gave further reports on township turmoil. (see pages 20-24)

To end the afternoon, Natal's contribution to the discussion on unrest was provided by another guest speaker, David Ginsberg from Natal University. He said that 'capital creates instability via unemployment'. Mr Ginsberg's paper generated controversy and a lively debate.



Merle Beetge



Annica van Gylswyk



David Ginsberg

Saturday morning

This was a closed session in which we broke into groups to discuss some questions about violence.

We concluded that, regrettably, violence has become inevitable in the struggle for a just society. Our own stand continues to be a non-violent one. Our leaders should continue to highlight the causes of violence and counter-violence and we should continue to promote non-violence.

Saturday afternoon

By this time we had reached our 22nd paper. It was a more hopeful TRAC report on removals read by Joanne Yawitch. Pessa Weinberg presented her report on threatened communities in Natal. We will deal with these in a later issue.



Gill de Vlieg



Joanne Yawitch

From Jenny de Tolly we heard about urban removals and resistance to them in the Western Cape. Margaret Nash included a policy document for organisations interested in the development of Kyalitsha on a non-apartheid basis.



Pessa Weinberg



Ann Colvin

From Ann Colvin we heard about the lack of housing in Grahamstown and the struggle to maintain a township at Hambanati in Natal. (We will also deal with housing again in a later issue).

The most important reports will come up again in later issues of *SASH*. Mary Burton presented Laurine Platsky's proposal about farmworkers, 'the most isolated and exploited group'. She proposed that the Sash should compile a booklet about rights, pensions and so on in its series 'You and . . .' for farmworkers.



Solveig Pyper



Beulah Rollnick

Two other booklets in the 'You and . . .' series were circulated — 'You and your state pension' by Sheena Duncan and 'You and Khayelitsha' by three members of Cape Western.

Nicola Peart, via Mary Burton, reported that the Government has referred the matter of marriage laws affecting Africans to the Law commission. Work has started on it.



Margaret Nash (left) and Mary Burton

Beulah Rollnick told us that someone is now employed to go into the townships to organise the unemployed in order to solve some UIF problems. Solveigh Pyper reported on mismanagement of these funds and requested more information be sent to her.

The afternoon ended with Di Bishop reporting on a fact-finding visit that she and Molly Blackburn had made to Namibia (see page 12).

Press statement demanding the implementation of various measures to resolve the war and its atrocities in Namibia.

Saturday evening

We spent a relaxed and happy evening enjoying the hospitality of the Port Elizabeth members at Zoe Riordan's house. The evening ended with a video of the End Conscription Campaign Launch in Cape Town. Sheena Duncan was a guest speaker at this meeting.

Sunday morning

The morning started with paper 31 on repression, in which Barbara Creecy discussed the use of detention, the courts and a 'variety of methods to curb democratic organisation and harass its leaders'.

Natal coastal read out a proposal calling on the national executive to appoint an editorial committee to work with the new editor to ensure that 'the magazine serves the aims of the Black Sash as effectively as possible'. Glenda Webster reaffirmed the request she made to the national executive before conference that she wanted to work with a committee.

Joanne Yawitch presented a TRAC report on ethnic divisions and repression in the Bantustans.

Annica van Gylswyk reported on pensions in Winterveld, Bophuthatswana.

We discussed the effectiveness and value of Bophuthatswana's Bill of Rights. It was suggested that the Black Sash should prepare a booklet or paper on the abrogation of the Bill of Rights in Bophuthatswana.

We elected leaders for 1985.

Sheena Duncan announced that Cape Western may be prepared to take over the national headquarters in 1986.



Jenny de Tolly



Beaven Runciman



Judith Hawarden



National president - Sheena Duncan, (centre), national vice-presidents - Joyce Harris (right), and Ethel Walt

Sunday afternoon

The last session of conference dealt with the End Conscription Campaign and Education.

Teral Bower of Grahamstown, Ann Colvin of Durban, Glenda Glover of Johannesburg, Sandy Stewart of Port Elizabeth and Beaver Runciman of Cape Town all reported on ECC activities and followup in their areas. We will deal with these reports again in a later issue.

Judith Hawarden presented an overview of the crisis in black education in 1984. This was complemented by a paper that Annica van Gylswyk prepared on discussions she had had with residents in areas affected by the education crisis in Pretoria.

Finally, Natal coastal agreed to host the 1986 National Conference in Durban starting on March 13.

A resolution that the Black Sash continues to call for an end both to military conscription and to the deployment of troops in policing the apartheid system in the black townships.

The Black Sash supports the Ad Pacem proposals of the Civil Rights League that call for recognition by the government of:

- **Conscientious objection to military service on the grounds of deeply held ethical convictions against war, and of**
- **alternative, non-military forms of national service.**



photo: Colin Urganhart, E P Herald

Townships in turmoil



A mob flees from a shopping complex in Evaton as police confront looters.

photo: Sunday Times

Townships around the country have been in turmoil throughout the past year. The Sash witnessed one such flare up in Port Elizabeth in March.

What is the background to this turmoil?

The spark in each township may be different — it could be rising rents, opposition to the new constitution, demonstrations around educational issues or increases in bus fares. Whatever it is, the fuel that keeps it going is a powder keg of general discontent including:

- * Discontent with community councils, black police, administration boards
- * dissatisfaction with bantu education
- * disillusion caused by the new constitution
- * economic and social hardship (unemployment, increasing prices, rents etc)
- * internal power struggles within the black communities themselves
- * police and army conduct.

There are no clear divisions between one cause and another. A civic issue such as increasing rent may lead to police interference and the detention of a leader. This in turn will lead to ferment in the schools and a boycott of class, as was the case in Lingelihle, Cradock (see *Sash*, Volume 27, Nos 2 & 4)

This assessment of the situation becomes apparent

when one looks at the information on urban unrest that was presented to conference. Each township has a slightly different story to tell but together they amount to the same pattern of discontent and turmoil.

Unrest in **TEMBISA**, according to **GILL de VLIEG'S** report, was sparked off by specifically educational issues — students' demands for SRC's. Yet the first target was a councillor. Gill's article gives us greater insight into the causes of antagonism against the police in the townships (see page 23).

A report from **MARGARET BARKER** and **GUS MACDONALD** in **GRAHAMSTOWN** documents the stages of unrest between October, '84 and January this year. This turmoil begins with opposition to the constitution, but it takes place in the schools and the first target is a black policeman (see page 24).

In the **VAAL TRIANGLE**, the pending implementation of a rent increase on September 1, 1984 fuelled a major crisis which to this day remains unresolved. It left 14 people dead and some 300 injured. In that month over 1 000 were arrested and currently some 80 are still in detention.

BARBARA CREECY'S report to conference lists the hardships and grievances of the people and describes police and army involvement.

● The VAAL uprising

On September 1, the Lekoa town Council's R5.90 rent increase was due to come into effect. The areas affected were Evaton, Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Bophelong and Boipatong with a total population of about 300 000.

Housing was a major grievance. Rents in the area ranging between R50 and R100 per month, are amongst

the highest in the country and more than half of the households were already in arrears in their rents. In other townships rents are below R50 a month.

Other causes of dissatisfaction in the area were that:
* Evaton residents live in constant fear of losing their



Barbara Creecy

freehold status. Evaton is the last remaining township in the Transvaal where people have retained freehold rights.

- * There are 150 000 shacks in the area housing illegals and people on waiting lists for houses. In addition to being unsatisfactory places to stay, shack dwellers live with the ever-present danger that their shacks may be demolished.
- * Electricity tariffs were to be increased from 53c to 62c a unit and the levy from R10 to R12 in rented houses, and from R12,50 to R15 in bought houses.
- * The Lekoa and Evaton town councils were elected by very low polls in December 1983. In Lekoa the poll was 15% of registered voters which represents only 9% of the adult population.
- * Councillors, including the mayor of the Lekoa town council, Esau Mahlatsi, own the majority of township businesses. Since becoming mayor, Mahlatsi has acquired three garages and a roadhouse. Three councillors have been charged with acquiring as much as R500 000 through the illegal allocation of bottle store licenses, sites and houses.

The rent increases were announced in July 1984. The Vaal Civic Association, Vaal Womens Organisation, Cosas, Vaal Youth Steering Committee and various trade unions came together to oppose the increases. In Sharpeville an anti-rent committee was set up to oppose the increases.

The organisations involved called meetings, wrote letters to the councils and circulated a petition. The increases were not retracted.

At meetings held during the week prior to the implementation of the increase, residents decided on a one-day work stay-away on Monday September 3.

On that day the majority of residents stayed away from work. 2 000 people embarked on a peaceful march to the Houtkop Administration board offices to ask that the increase be dropped.

On their way to the board's offices they stopped at the home of councillor Caesar Motjeane and asked him to join them. Instead he allegedly opened fire on the crowd, hitting two people. The crowd retaliated and killed him.

Violence broke out and police used teargas, rubber bullets and as the day wore on, birdshot and buckshot. Official figures released by the police at the end of the day were 14 dead and 8 police and 32 civilians injured. However residents and church ministers say the real figures were much higher. One estimate was 250 injured (*Star* 4-9-84).

Included among the dead were two community councillors. Beer halls, administration board buildings, shops and bottle stores were stoned and set alight. Cars and buses were damaged.

By Tuesday police announced that 48 people had been injured. the *Rand Daily Mail* estimated 300 (*RDM* 5-9-84). Police instructed hospitals in the area not to release casualty figures (*Star* 4-9-84). Eye witnesses say that people were too scared to go to hospital because injured people were arrested as they left the casualty section.

Many more people could not get to hospitals because there was no transport (see story in *Repression in a time of reform, a booklet produced by the 'Committee Against Repression'*).

People could not go to work. Only a token bus service was running to the edges of the township. With businesses in the townships either closed or burnt down, people could not get food and without transport they could not go to the white towns to get food either.

On Wednesday, a large crowd marched on the Sharpeville administration board offices carrying white flags and a banner saying 'Rent R30, Release Moruti'. Moruti was a local priest, thought to have been detained the previous day. The delegation demanded that:

- * All rents be decreased to R30
- * All members of the town council resign
- * Police release all people arrested or detained during the unrest
- * They be allowed to bury those who had died in the unrest without police interference.

The delegation spent eight hours negotiating with board officials, two town councillors and a police representative while a crowd of 3 000, standing face to face with a large contingent of armed policemen — waited outside the office to hear the outcome of the meeting.

The board and the council agreed to call an emergency meeting to discuss the demand to reduce rents and service charges. The other demands were not met. Residents demanded that the increases be scrapped and rents be reduced to R30 a month. From this time until the present day 300 000 households have refused to pay rent.

In an effort to break the resistance of residents to the increase, the police and army kept the Vaal townships in a virtual state of siege throughout September and October. Some of the features of this period included:

- * All meetings were banned
- * There were large-scale arrests. Over 1 000 people were arrested in September. Many were charged with public violence and intimidation. Some paid admission of guilt fines while others were released on bail of between R200 and R300. This bail was far higher than usually set by the courts for this type of offence. As a result many could not afford bail and remained in custody.
- * Many of those released on bail or discharged were immediately re-detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act. Over 80 people are still in detention, some of them for more than six months.
- * From October, the security police began systematically detaining people connected to the Vaal Civic Association, Vaal Organisation of Women, Cosas, Vaal Youth Steering Committee and other organisations in the area. People detained included Father Lord McCamel, chairman of the Vaal Civic Association and of the Vaal Ministers Solidarity Group set up to help in the situation of unrest, and Petrus Mokoeana, chair of the Evaton Ratepayers Association.
- * Funerals of victims of the unrest were characterised by a heavy police presence. Funeral processions were teargassed and in one incident police surrounded buses leaving a funeral, sjambokked the passengers and arrested 204 people. At another funeral the following weekend (23-9-84), 598 mourners were arrested. They were kept in custody under Section 50 of the Criminal Procedures Act — without adequate food, washing and sleeping facilities — for more than 48 hours.
- * Police constantly patrolled the streets imposing an

informal curfew at night. People — especially in groups — after 6.00 pm were arbitrarily teargassed and sometimes shot at. Many of the innocent victims of police action are suing the Minister of Police.

- * On September 26, 7 000 members of the SADF army and police moved into Sebokeng in what was named 'Operation Palmiet'. Soldiers cordoned off the area from 2 am and conducted house to house searches. The intention was to 'crack down on criminal and revolutionary elements' said Minister of Law and Order, Le Grange. The police and army also issued pamphlets reading: 'We are here to promote a normal social life, continued education, safe travel, stability, a healthy community, the delivery of food — TRUST US'.

Over 350 people were arrested for pass offences and detained. This was the first time in recent history that the army has been used on such an extensive and public scale to curb township unrest.

- * Numerous anonymous smear pamphlets were distributed in the Vaal townships. For example one pamphlet called on people not to observe the stay-away and blamed the violence on the Vaal Civic Association.

Slogans painted on walls throughout the townships blame Cosas for the unrest. Some read 'Kill Cosas'.

- * Leading members of organisations were subjected to victimisation. The home of the vice-chair of the VCA, Esau Raditsela was burnt down on 19-9-84, some neighbours claimed they saw police near the house minutes before the blaze began (*RDM* 25-9-84). More recently members of the Sharpeville DPSC have been awakened in the middle of the night by armed thugs and threatened with assault and death.
- * Organisations in the area claim that the police have sponsored the setting up of new organisations such as the Sharpeville Students National Resistance Movement which aim to sow division and confusion amongst students.

At the end of September the Lekoa mayor announced that the rent increases would be suspended until June 1985. He also warned that the standard of services would drop and projects such as tarring of roads, building of creches and the erection of high mast lights would be scrapped.

Only eight of the 42 councillors in the Vaal have heeded residents call for them to resign. 26 councillors and their families are staying in a heavily policed complex surrounded by barbed wire on the outskirts of Sebokeng. Three were killed in the unrest.

The rent boycott continues. This is the longest rent boycott in South African history. By January 1985 the council was owed R10 million in rent arrears, increasing at a rate of R2 million a month.

The police, the town council and the administration boards have tried numerous ways to entice or force residents to pay rents, such as:

Threats of eviction for non-payment of rent; employers asked to deduct rent from pay packets; an electricity black-out; garbage not collected. Pamphlets were distributed encouraging people to buy their houses under 99-year leasehold, in which case they need not pay rent.

These attempts have not deterred the resolve to boycott rents or to continue calling for the resignation of town councillors and the release of all detainees.

During the November 5/6 Transvaal-wide stay-away, 95% of Vaal residents stayed at home.

A Vaal Information Service is working to help victims of the unrest and Detainees Parents Support Committees have been established in Sharpeville and Sebokeng. As a result of their pressure, some detainees have been allowed food parcels and visits.

So far only two people have appeared in court. Mongezi Radebe and Mantsosa Ramakau were charged with high treason. When the trial began the charges of high treason were dropped and they were fined R800 for minor offences and released.

Barbara Creecy



Rioting in Evaton

photo: Sunday Times

● **TEMBISA — An informal look at a township**

Tembisa, north/east of Johannesburg between Kempton Park to the south, Olifantsfontein (Midrand) to the north and Halfway House to the west is approximately 27 km from Johannesburg and 38 km from Pretoria.

People from Tembisa work in the factories of Isando, Modderfontein and Olifantsfontein, the shops and homes of Kempton Park and Edenvale. Employment is also found at Jan Smuts Airport and in Johannesburg and Pretoria. Transport to work is provided by PUTCO, township taxis, a rail service and private cars.

It is a medium sized township and over the last year has been beset with the same problems that many townships country-wide have had to face.

In July last year, the school boycotts began in Tembisa. The boycott was restricted to the high schools, of which there are five. Meetings to discuss the boycott were held on a regular basis in one of the cinemas. These meetings were organised by COSAS, a branch of which was begun in Tembisa in February 1984. Slide shows, videos, plays and poems were also presented at the meetings.

On August 21 the first student demonstration began. The students marched through the main streets singing songs and holding banners and placards demanding SRC's. The march was dispersed by the police firing tear gas. That same day the house of a councillor/teacher was burnt, as were beerhalls and a school. Windows were broken at the Mayor's shop and at the home of the head of the PTA.

A pattern of arrest began that day and continues to the present. The police disperse demonstrators who then flee in all directions. It is alleged that the police then patrol the streets picking up anyone who looks a likely suspect to them. Allegedly these 'suspects' are taken to the police station where they are beaten to elicit information. They are then released or kept in custody and charged with public violence. Many youngsters remain in custody longer than necessary because their parents frequently do not realise they have been arrested. Bail is often set at R200 per offence. After a demonstration or attack on buses, cars etc, the police will continue to patrol the streets in 'hippos', firing tear smoke throughout the rest of the day and into the night. Workers coming home are often affected by this and have to rush home from the transport.

From August, police have been guarding some councillor's houses and shops. This is when protection has been requested by the owners. There are reports of these police being very undisciplined. A youth, EM was accused of having a catapult and dagga. Two policemen then handcuffed him and beat him with their fists and riflebutts. They searched him and only found a packet of commercial cigarettes. The youth panicked and tried to run away. He was shot and killed by the police. His family were approached later by the police and asked if they would like 'protection' from the students for the funeral.

During the 'stayaway' of November 5/6, Tembisa was subjected to a great deal of violence. From the early hours of Monday barricades had been put across the streets. These barricades were made up of refuse con-

tainers, cement mixers, plastic milkbottle crates, rocks, bricks, wire etc. Beerhalls and councillor's homes were set alight as were five carriages of a train. Hippos constantly roamed the streets firing tear gas, rubber bullets and birdshot. Anyone found in the street was picked up and taken to the police station. It has been impossible to establish all the trauma arising from this period. One doctor has told of the numerous elderly women and children that he treated for bird shot wounds.

People disliked going to the local Tembisa Hospital, because they felt that the doctors would report them to the police. Mr E was standing inside his yard when three black policemen approached him and asked him why he was there. Without waiting for his reply one of the policemen shot him in the leg. His lower leg has had to be amputated. Mr E was charged with public violence and the case has recently been dismissed. It was also a time when some people took advantage of the unrest situation and settled personal vendettas, ie by burning business rival's shops.

Except for a period in December/January the situation in Tembisa has been tense. Shortly after the 'stayaway' the SADF (army) moved into Tembisa. Some members of the army were camped on the outskirts amongst farmworkers houses. This is near a 'back' entrance into Tembisa which the police had sealed off during the 'stayaway'. It has not been easy to assess the effect of the army within the township. Certainly the violence increased in all aspects, and the whole population of Tembisa felt violated. The psychological effects of the occupation will never be known. One young man has had fainting attacks, although otherwise he is physically fine.

A Civic Association has begun functioning in Tembisa. It has a lot of support in some sections of the township, but has, as yet, not been organised in other sections. Unfortunately it also seems as though there is a problem between pro BC/pro UDF elements within the Civic Association.

This tension between the two ideologies came to a head on January 20 1985, when AZAPO attempted to form a branch of AZASM in Tembisa. This was shortly after the visit to SA by Senator Edward Kennedy. A physical fight broke out and people were injured.

Over the past nine months Tembisa has seen the harassment of the Shangaans, the Simba boycott, the closing of shebeens and night clubs over the Christmas/New year period to observe 'black Christmas', the beginning of a women's group, a youth group and the Civic Association.

Students returned to school in January. However when the organising secretary of COSAS in Tembisa was arrested in February, his school again boycotted classes. A peaceful march of about 5 000 students to the police station demanding the release of a teacher and students resulted in the DET suspending all high schools until March 11. There is also evidence that primary schools are now becoming involved and are also leaving their classes.

In the future lies a possible PUTCO boycott. At present buses are having to halt on the outskirts of the township. The economic stress felt by the workers and unemployed alike is adding to the discontent already apparent within the township.

Gill de Vlieg

● GRAHAMSTOWN —

Unrest and boycotts

Stage 1 In September 1984, a countrywide call to make known black peoples' attitude to the new constitution was observed with enthusiasm by some blacks in Grahamstown. The children at the two high schools and one lower secondary school stayed away on the first day of the call. Attendance was sporadic until the end of the September.

Stage 2 By the beginning of October the schools boycott was totally effective. The students from the high schools went into the lower and higher primary schools and intimidated both staff and pupils for several days until it was impossible for the schools to continue. During this period the obvious focus of discontent which is Raglan Road, the main route to East London, was under siege most days from about 5 pm onwards. All travellers came under the hail of stones. There was a constant police patrol.

Stage 3 The closure of schools meant that there were 10 000 children out on the streets. Confrontation with the police was inevitable particularly when public transport was threatened. (We now no longer have public transport in Grahamstown). The white teachers at Nom-bulelo Secondary School, compelled to attend by Departmental regulations, had their car tyres slashed. There were barricades in the streets, the police presence was not enough and so the hippo army vehicles manned by national servicemen from the local army camp were called out. Teargas and rubber bullets were used to keep order but that resulted in a number of people being seriously injured and hospitalised. There were reports of sjambokking, house raids, arrests and all the time the townships were lit up at night by either one or two mobile searchlights stationed on Gunfire Hill below the 1820 Monument.

Stage 4 The first death in Grahamstown came in the beginning of November when a constable's house was attacked by 200 youths and the constable retaliated by shooting. A work stay-away was called for on November 9 and 70% of the population responded (as a result some people lost their jobs though employers such as the Municipality only docked their wages). On that day a large number of youths went to Port Alfred for a funeral. The second death occurred in Grahamstown within hours of the funeral of the first victim. The family of this 18-year-old boy particularly requested that there should be no stay-away on the day of the funeral as they did not want more people to suffer or lose jobs.



Margaret Barker (left) and Gus Macdonald

Stage 5 There was a period of uneasy quiet while negotiations for the return to school in the New Year were being conducted before the end of the 1984 school year. Then the burnings started. Three lower primary schools housed in church buildings hired by the Department were attacked and some of the classrooms were destroyed. Then the historic Methodist church in Victoria Road was gutted. Government buildings, beerhalls, post office community centres also were subject to arson. New Years day was particularly bad. The building which housed the Advice Office, GADRA, Civilian Blind, Cripple Care etc was burned when trees which form the boundary with ECAB storerooms next door were set alight. The building was looted. In the coloured township on the same day a house which was the centre for GYM (Grahamstown Youth Movement), GRACA, CRC (Grahamtown Resettlement Committee) SAAWU (Trade Union) was attacked by a petrol bomb and the interior gutted. It seems as if at this point older people decided that they must press more heavily for restoration to normality. No one was sure that school would start but in fact January 8 saw 60% of lower primary children back at school.

All 1984 exams have been written from Sub A to Std 9 and the 1985 academic year has begun. We hear of isolated incidents of unrest but generally the townships are quiet. What is incalculable is white backlash and the damage to community relations in a small town where it is not possible to escape the influence of other groups.

A local academician has written a paper 'Continuing unrest — a small town perspective' which is available to be read. He said

... there seem to be five inter-related elements involved in the present troubles, most of which are essentially national issues, but each of which possesses a particular local flavour mediated by unique incidents and the personalities of the individuals involved. The elements are: (i) the new constitution (ii) the crisis in local government, (iii) black educational issues, (iv) the drought and recession, (v) internal power struggles within the black communities. Where the scale is too small for the leadership to be inconspicuous, troubles are less likely, but Graaf Reinet, Cradock and Grahamstown, and even Port Alfred with its 12 000 black residents have reached that critical mass necessary to sustain unrest over months.

**Margaret Barker
Gus Macdonald**

Albany Region

Uitenhage police station — on a Sunday afternoon

Conference with its 40 papers in 22 hours was one thing. The events outside were another. On several occasions conference attention was drawn away to these events. Most notable of them were calls from members of the black community who sought help when they heard that their children were being abused in prison or assaulted at the hands of the police.

AUDREY COLEMAN was one of the Black Sash delegates appointed to investigate these calls and she became closely involved in these rescue attempts. They led her and other conference delegates to witness the goings-on in a police station in a black township on a Sunday afternoon. Here Audrey describes her involvement in an informal talk with the editor.

‘On Friday night, the day after conference began, I was dining in a restaurant when I received a call from Molly Blackburn to come immediately to attend to a serious matter.

Molly had a highly-respected member of Uitenhage’s Kwanobuhle black township with her. He had just been released from Port Elizabeth’s Rooihell prison where he had been charged with public violence. He was extremely upset by his experiences in prison. He had seen as many as 100 children in prison. They were being abused, mainly by older prisoners and had complained to him that they were very scared.

The next morning at conference we decided on a plan of action that included —

- * having an interview with the magistrate
- * making contact with bodies such as Namda, Masa
- * arranging an interdict to get the children released
- * drawing up a national memorandum about police conduct in the Eastern Cape.

Mary Burton, Sheena Duncan and I were appointed to see the magistrate. That afternoon we went to the Law Courts to meet PE’s chief magistrate, the chief magistrate of Uitenhage, his assistant, the captain of the prison and four advocates whom we knew.

We put to them what we had heard was happening to children in prison. They did not deny that there were children in the cells, nor that they were very young. The magistrate said, however, that the abuse was impossible. He had visited the prison the day before and no one had complained. Moreover, the captain said that children were kept completely separately in cells away from adults. They did not agree, as we suggested, that the children may have been too afraid to complain to either of these white officials.

The only success we had was in getting permission for parents to visit their children — if we could find the parents.

We returned to conference and the man from the Kwanobuhle community went to try to contact the parents. He promised to phone us on Sunday at lunch time.

That call on Sunday was another urgent call for help. He asked us to come to Uitenhage immediately as another group of parents feared for the safety of their

children.

It was decided that nine delegates should leave conference to go with Molly to Uitenhage. We met the parents outside the Post Office. They had a list of names of nine children who had been arrested. We went to what we thought was the charge office to try to locate the children. The officer in charge told us that we should go to the building next door.

We went out of that building, through a gate in the grounds to the building next door. The parents were with us. We came to a double door, Molly knocked and walked in. I was right behind her. I heard her shout “Good God, what is happening here?”

There in front of us was a black man in plain clothes with a long quirt in his hand. He had just brought it down on a young man lying on the floor, manacled to the leg of a table. His hands were manacled behind him and he was lying awkwardly with his head askew against the leg of the table. Blood was running down the side of his face and his lip was severely bruised. He seemed to be in great pain.

The man assaulting him immediately ran out of the room. I looked around and saw another man sitting behind a desk eating. He went on eating throughout the entire episode while we were there.

We asked the young man on the floor whether he’d been charged and for what. He said he hadn’t been charged with anything. His name was Norman Kona. Just then a white sergeant came into the room, also dressed in plain clothes. He identified himself as Sergeant Nel. He showed no surprise at the fact that someone was lying manacled to the table, bleeding. He shouted at us to get out of the room. Molly refused, demanding to see the station commander. The man refused to fetch him and an argument raged.

I then spoke to three men sitting on a bench. They too had not been charged. They had been arrested early that morning and said they had all been assaulted. I decided to phone the magistrate so that he could see what was going on. He agreed to come but said that it was out of his jurisdiction to do so.

Back in the charge office, Molly, Di and the others had discovered that the names of the four young men had not even been entered in the charge book, nor were the police able to establish who was responsible for the four men.

At this point the magistrate, a Mr Groenewald, arrived. He immediately told the police that he knew he had no right to be there. He also assured us that there was no way he could do anything about the situation because it was out of his jurisdiction. He did not ask to see the young man who was assaulted and in fact decided to wait in a separate room away from us while we waited for the colonel to come.

In the meantime Molly had been arguing with Sergeant Nel. He decided to avoid the whole issue by

taking the four young men away. Molly followed them to the police cells.

Then another white policeman came into the room where the rest of us were still waiting. He came in to pick up a R1 rifle that was lying abandoned on the desk. He reeked of liquor. As he picked up the rifle he dropped a magazine of bullets, just missing Gill de Vlieg's toes. He too started shouting at us, demanding to know what we were doing there.

A few minutes later Colonel Pretorius arrived. He agreed to 'do something about' the reeking sergeant and then took all nine of us plus the parents to his office. There, one of the parents, a Mr M, spoke of the troubles he was having. He said that if it hadn't been for the Black Sash he would not have been in a position to explain to the colonel about all the things that were happening to families.

Mr M's eldest son was in the North End Prison in Port Elizabeth. His second son, had been let out on bail after being charged with public violence, but when he went to report to the police as he had to daily, he was re-detained. That was the last Mr M had seen of him until he had word that his son was being assaulted.

We told the colonel what we had seen that afternoon. He agreed to come to the cells with us to find the four young men. On our way we stopped at the charge office where the colonel spoke to someone. Just after that the magistrate left. He never explained why he was going or that he was satisfied that the young people were okay. Neither did he ask to see them to assure himself that they were alright.

When we got to the cells Molly went in with the colonel. Molly came out and told us that the four men we were looking for were not there.

We took Colonel Pretorius to the charge office where we had witnessed the assault and showed him the blood on the floor.

We were amazed by the attitude of these officers. At no time did they ask to see the man who had assaulted the young man. They told us that they could not find the young men. Their movement into or out of the police cells had not been recorded. The officers were unperturbed by this.

Some of our party went to the hospital to look for the men. After half an hour we returned to the police station where we were told that the young men had been taken away in a van and the police would not be able to contact the van as it had no radio. We never found the men and eventually left the police station.

For us, the whole episode was breathtaking. There was not even a pretence of bringing wrong-doers to book. There was a latent sense of violence — police walking in and out with guns. They seemed angry that

we should dare to question what was happening in a police station.

After we got back to Johannesburg, Molly Blackburn phoned to tell us that Norman Kona had come to the Black Sash to make a statement. He had actually been released at 11 on Sunday night. He had been in a room near where we had consulted with Colonel Pretorius. So when we were told the young men had been taken away, this was a total lie. Norman had been taken across the road to a doctor. He was returned to the officers who made him sign a statement in which he had had to swear that he would not claim damages for assault against any of the officers otherwise he would not have been released.

We came away from our national conference in Port Elizabeth with a very real sense that the Eastern Cape was in total crisis. When Thursday dawned, the day of the massacre, we were not surprised. We had come to realise from our experiences that police were capable of this type of action. '

Police conduct:

A national memorandum

Conference decided to collect affidavits for a memorandum on police conduct in the townships. Joyce Harris was one of the people involved in this work. In the memorandum she concludes:

'There are too many corroborating affidavits for anyone to believe that the police are blameless in helping to create conditions in the Eastern Cape which led to the disaster on March 21.

In the first place they must administer and enforce unpopular laws. In the second place they are an arm of government, and could not operate in the manner they do without its tacit consent. This must be assumed unless there are strong indications from those in authority that such behaviour is considered totally reprehensible, through the taking of firm and visible action against those in the police force responsible for such behaviour.

To date such action has been conspicuous by its absence.

In the meanwhile the type of mindless brutality indulged in by members of the police force in the Eastern Cape can only destroy their own moral fibre, in addition to fostering feelings of anger, frustration and hatred in the black community. The end result is really "too terrible to contemplate".'

Below is an extract from an affidavit that illustrates the kind of 'mindless brutality' that members of the police force have 'indulged' in . . .

Affidavit by Norman Kona

6 . . . I went to the charge office in Uitenhage at 10.30 am on Sunday, March 17 to sign the bail book. A policeman whose name I don't know but whom I

would recognise, took me by the back of my shirt collar and took me to the CID room and left me to sit there until about 11 o'clock. Two CID officials were watching me. My sister who had come with me to the office had been sent away. Then another three officials came in. One of these is known to me as Mr Simanga and he took me away and hit me with his fists on our way to a police van.

They left me locked in the van in the yard. After some time he (Mr Simanga) took me back to the room, kicking me again. He and Mr Sanophepha were there. Mr Simanga handcuffed my hands behind my back very tightly so that my wrists were cut. Then he hit me with a broomstick on my head and face until the broomstick broke in pieces. That is how I have these cuts on my forehead, face and neck. Mr Sanophepha was watching.

Afterward they brought other people in from the van. I know the other people by sight but not their names. Mr Simanga started to hit me with a yellow sjambok. Then he put the whip down and they pushed me with my back against the wall and kicked me in the stomach. Then another official (a short man) joined Mr Simanga and kicked me. Then Mr Simanga told me to sit against the leg of the table and pulled me so I was right up against the table leg. Somehow I found I was handcuffed to the table leg.

The short man stamped on my hands (still handcuffed) and Mr Simanga stood on my thighs, and then the short man kicked my face and neck. I was lying on the floor beside the table and one of them jumped on my stomach and the short man stood on my neck. Mr Simanga went away and the short man took the yellow sjambok and began hitting me with it while I was still lying on the floor handcuffed to the table.

The door opened and I saw Mrs Molly Blackburn, Mr Geoffrey Blaauw and several other ladies. Then the short CID man ran out with the sjambok.'

And, at the end of the section on affidavits about children the memorandum reaches the following conclusion:

'An extraordinary picture emerges of children being shot at quite indiscriminately — just in passing as it were — and then being removed to doctors' consulting rooms and taken to hospital where they are arrested on discharge if they have been shot. It is apparently a crime to be shot by the police. Many are charged with public violence, but where should that charge be laid?'

An example of this:

Affidavit 17, from RM of Kwanobuhle

'. . . On Tuesday, January 29 1985, I was at my work. N (aged 12 years) often accompanies me to work and at about 2 pm I asked her to go to a shop in a backyard to get cool drink. She did not get it there and had to go further to Mphilisi Stores. When I saw the time was passing and she had not returned, I sent an older girl to look for her. . . She met N coming back from the shop carrying the cool drink. They were walking together when N was shot. . . When I arrived at the surgery, I was told the child had been picked up by the police. . . At the (provincial) hospital we saw the child waiting for treatment. She had been shot in her left shoulder, an arm, beneath her left breast and in her eyes. She had been unconscious, but at this time she was crying and saying that her body and her head were aching. . . We signed consent papers for an operation. . . .'

NOTE: Copies of the national memorandum on police conduct are available from the Johannesburg Black Sash office at R2 per copy



A Uitenhage father, asks members of the Black Sash to help him find his two sons, arrested by the police — at left is Di Bishop, with Audrey Coleman looking on.

What they said about conference

Audrey Coleman:
It was a terrible conference in a way because we came to realise that we are at war.



Gill de Vlieg

Molly Blackburn:
It was an act of God that you were all here at the time because I don't know what we would have done without you.



Gill de Vlieg

Matthew Goniwe asked to become a member of the Black Sash!



Glenda Webster



Gill de Vlieg

Founder members Noel Robb (left) and Moira Henderson (Cape Town) and Jeanette Davidoff (right, Johannesburg), in combination said: *'Conference was quite different to any other. It was held at a time when history in South Africa was at the crossroads. We became involved in the unrest of the community around us — much more realistic than sitting around listening to academic discussion, although, Jeanette adds, the younger members who made their first bow presented excellent papers. And all the delegates demonstrated amazing alacrity in responding to the community.'*

South African Journal on Human Rights

The Centre for Applied Legal Studies in conjunction with Lawyers for Human Rights has published a new journal.

It aims to inform about the state of human rights in South Africa, and to provide a forum for an exchange of ideas affecting justice in South Africa. The Journal will endeavour to strike a balance between a high quality legal periodical and a magazine for human rights proponents in search of informa-

tion and advice. It will include articles, case notes, comments, book reviews and an index on recent human rights issues.

Edited by Geoff Budlender, John Dugard, Nicholas Haysom, Gilbert Marcus, Christina Murray and Johan van der Vyver assisted by a countrywide editorial board of human rights lawyers.

Details of subscriptions are available from South African Journal on Human Rights, Ravan Press P O Box 31134, Braamfontein 2017.

What did the Black Sash do in 1984?



Marion Spies

MARION SPIES of the Pretoria branch summarises the many and varied activities in which the Sash, with all its regions, has been involved over the past year.

Political events provide a frame of reference for Sash work

The referendum dominated Sash activities in 1984. This was in line with a suggestion of Joyce Harris' that political events should provide a frame of reference for Sash work.

The eruption of violence after the August elections has since become a feature of township life. Over 130 people are known to have died and well over 1 000 injured. The full list may never be known.

Telegrams were sent to Rev A Hendrikse, House of Representatives, and Mr A Rajbansee and Mr J N Reddy, House of Delegates drawing attention to the detentions of persons legitimately opposing the tricameral parliament. The telegrams called on members not to take their seats unless the detainees were unconditionally released. No replies were received.

Sash concern with increasing violence

Throughout 1984 the Black Sash consistently condemned the growing militarisation and the use of armed force against civilians. During conference Sheena Duncan reiterated her total opposition to the use of violence to achieve change as it inevitably creates new violence. As a civil rights organisation, Black Sash, which is committed to peaceful change, agonizes over the year's events.

The unrest in the Albany area, which has received scant publicity, has created a tense atmosphere. During the arson and violence at New Year, which was mainly aimed at symbolic institutions such as the administration building and beer halls, other organisations like churches and schools suffered and the advice office was completely gutted.

The Port Elizabeth advice office suffered a series of damages causing the flat dwellers above the office in Russel Road to draw up a petition at the beginning of June for the eviction of the Black Sash. The premises were vacated a week later because of a fire which started when a burning tyre was pushed against the door of the advice office.

The national president

During 1984 Sheena Duncan travelled to Sweden, Germany and Holland, giving a total of 46 talks on her brief overseas visits and at least as many talks in South Africa. During her extensive travels here she has conducted workshops on pensions and advice office in numerous

centres. She has established the principle that advice offices should be educative so that through knowledge people may learn to solve their own problems.

Meetings

A feature of each region has been the important role played by regular meetings. The wide variety of topics ranging from such intellectual concepts as 'Strategies of protest' to the nitty-gritty of 'Gang warfare', reflect the deep humanitarian concerns of Sash. Meetings have proved to be valuable sources of education and information, particularly as the majority of speakers have set such high standards.

Co-operation with other organizations

United Democratic Front (UDF)

Mr Molefe, general secretary of the UDF, welcomed the Sash proposal arising from the 1984 conference, to seek co-operation and observer status with UDF, as well as co-operation in various campaigns.

Sash was commended for challenging the evil system of removals and pass laws. Various regions have kept in close contact with UDF. Members of Sash, UDF and other organizations served on a 'Committee Against Repression' (CAR), producing a booklet '*Repression in a time of reform*'.

Other Groups

Sash is represented on the Conscientious Objectors Support Group (COSG) and has worked closely throughout the year with the Detainee Parent Support Committee (DPSC) and Detainee Support Committee (Descom).

There has also been co-operation with the Institute of Race Relations, Human Awareness Programme, the Legal Resources Centre, Lawyers for Human Rights, National Council for Women and Women for Peace, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the South African Bishops Conference.

Other committees and organisations that Sash has worked with are the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA), Diakonia, Hambanati Crisis Committee, National Organisation of Women, Catholic Diocese Justice and Peace Commission, Winterveld Action Committee and the Domestic Workers Think Tank.

Contact was made with many visitors from all over the world who make a point of visiting the advice offices, and often come to see Sheena who has gained international recognition.

Faced with the difficulties of internal dissent and detention of members, the Constitution Group has continued to meet at the home of Joyce Harris. With tact and tenacity, Joyce, as national vice president and Transvaal regional chairman, has managed to maintain a balance in the current atmosphere of hostilities. Her numerous articles and letters to the press have eloquently articulated Black Sash policy.

Unsung heroine

Merle Beetge, a member of Sash in the Transvaal, gained national recognition when the *Star* declared her 'Unsung heroine of the year 1984'. She received this acclaim for her work monitoring pensions in Grasmere.

Removals

All the regions are involved in the issue of removals. Continuous publicity has kept the issue of removals in the news so as to arouse public awareness. Articles and photographs dealt with Khayelitsha, Driefontein, Mgwali and Magopa while TRAC, the Grahamstown resettlement committee and AFRA circulated regular newsletters on removals. The map on removals was also updated.

In June Sash participated in a national focus on Khayelitsha and other areas organised by SACC. The Transvaal focussed attention on Kwa Ngema.

Beulah Rollnick conducted workshops on the Pass Laws for the people of Leandra and Brits. One was given at her home after Sash members were threatened with arrest outside Leandra.

Justice

Justice is an ever present concern of Sash. The report of the Hoexter Commission in April drew attention to the discrepancy in standards of justice between the Commissioners and Magistrates Courts. The report recommended that jurisdiction over pass offenders be transferred from the Department of Co-operation and Development to the Department of Justice. This was implemented in September.

Sash court monitors noticed an immediate decline in the number of offenders brought to court. A similar tendency occurred in curfew cases. Sash welcomes these improvements, but maintains there is no just way of administering unjust laws. Sash has always advocated the abolition of influx control, which was also recommended by the Hoexter Commission.

The DPSC estimated that the detention toll rose to its highest level at 1149 in 1984.

Detainee Abel Dube was eventually released after two years in detention, but was banished to Messina. The DPSC has received reports that politically active persons have been banished to the homelands as prohibited immigrants.

Throughout the year Sash members continued to attend political trials. The Black Sash having mounted the original demonstrations and protests when Steve Biko was killed, our members were present in Court this year when six individual doctors successfully brought a sup-

reme court application to compel the Medical and Dental Council to enquire further into the conduct of the Biko doctors.

End Conscription Campaign (ECC)

Sash members were circularised on the conference resolution on conscription and of the official launching of the ECC campaign in October. Whole-hearted support has not been obtained from all members, but an educative programme is under way and public awareness has been aroused. Stands in support of the campaign have received some positive response from the public. The Security Branch raided meetings in Durban and the Western Cape, but did not deter the participants. Cape Western is deeply involved in the campaign. Conference heard a special report on their activities.

Stands and demonstrations

Sash members continued to use this method to draw public attention to issues of grave concern.

Transvaal

In June a demonstration in support of the ECC campaign on Namibia was held. There was a fair amount of public support.

On August 27 a demonstration was organised in support of the church focus on forced removals. The posters covered a wider field than forced removals.

On November 29 a demonstration against the spate of detentions was also supported by Wits SRC, individual PFP members, the UDF, JODAC (Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee) and the Churches. Two Rabbis held prayer meetings. Proceedings commenced with a lunch-time prayer vigil at St Mary's Cathedral. The street demonstration started at 4 pm. Within minutes the police had arrested several demonstrators and confiscated their posters. In the end no charges were pressed on the total number of 36 arrested. However should a court case arise it will provide an opportunity to test the right to demonstrate.

Natal Coastal

Stands were held preceding both elections for the new constitution. Following the new tricameral parliament's inauguration, picket stands were held to mourn the constitution.

Natal Midlands

In November a protest against detention took place in the Cathedral grounds at three different places. Other organisations joined in taking turns to hold placards. Every 15 minutes the Cathedral bells rang. The Special Branch took photographs and noted car numbers but the protest went without incident.

Cape Eastern

In November a protest was held in conjunction with SACC, DPSC, UDF and others. It was backed by press statements and church services. Calls were issued for negotiations between black leaders and the government, the release of all detainees and full participation by blacks in the political system.

Cape Western

The western Cape had ten poster stands at regular inter-

vals throughout the year. Posters dealt with a wide range of political issues, including a commemoration of Sharpeville and Womens Day.

Cornelia Bullen-Smith also courageously held her own stands with photographs to draw attention to the plight of people in the western Cape.

Publications

A new teaching booklet by Sheena Duncan, *You and your State Pension* was published in English and Xhosa.

Another in this series, *You and Khayelitsha* was published by Cape Western in August. It is now being printed in Xhosa.

The conference booklet was edited by the Pretoria Branch and Cape Western helped publish the conference report.

Two important articles on influx control appeared, one in *Acta Juridica* and the other in *Leadership Essays*, a businessman's journal.

Sheena Duncan wrote an information pamphlet 'Rents and Service Charges' (on legal restrictions and raising rents in townships).

Throughout the year the Transvaal Rural Action Committee brought out newsletters on removals. The first was an introduction to TRAC and the 'Transvaal Overview'. Other pamphlets were 'The Myth of Voluntary Removals', 'Kwa Ngema', 'Valspan' and 'Mathopestad'. Working papers were also written on non-violent action and other subjects.

Cape Western published a leaflet on 'Don't ban our leaders', with a reprint of the Trevor Manuel article from the *Financial Mail*. They also put out 'Cancel the call-up' stickers.

Circulars

Since last conference, headquarters have sent out 13 circulars which have been invaluable in maintaining a strong network between regions, as well as conveying information, stating policy decisions and generating support. Various branches have also circularised newsletters to members.

Press statements and publicity

All regions have made frequent and regular use of the Press to comment on current events through articles, statements and letters. Enid Robertson compiled a list of all Black Sash publicity throughout the year which reflected 140 mentions in the Press which included some coverage in the overseas Press.

Membership

In 1984 the combined paid-up membership of all the Black Sash regions together came to 1 353. Of these regions, Transvaal had the most members with 658, Cape Western 400, Natal Coastal 117, Natal Midlands 78 and the other regions each under 40.

In June **Gita Dyzenhaus** lost her long and courageous battle against ill-health. At various times she held the offices of national vice-president, Transvaal chair and magazine editor. She was always a staunch, loving friend of Black Sash. She is greatly missed.

Fund raising

Transvaal raised R27 402 at the November morning market, which was not as much as the previous year,

probably due to the state of the economy; Pretoria had a bridge drive in September which brought in over R400; Natal Coastal raised R1 409 at a cheese and wine cum theatre evening. Two successful book sales brought in R360; Cape Eastern ran an unusually profitable cake sale in November which raised well over R200; Cape Western held a successful morning market as well as a boutique and fashion show.



Conference at work

Statement from Natal Coastal

We believe that the February 1985 issue of *SASH*, which provides major coverage of the work and attitudes of Mr John Kane-Berman and Prof Lawrence Schlemmer, read together with the November 1984 *SASH* editorial, which, expressly supports their opinions, implies that the general membership of Black Sash adheres to their views.

We totally reject this implication and disassociate ourselves from the impression created that we, as Black Sash members, support such attitudes.

Whereas Mr Kane-Berman and Prof Schlemmer give active support to Chief Buthelezi, the KwaZulu government and Inkatha, the Black Sash is frequently in opposition to them. The 1984 Black Sash Conference passed a statement expressing alarm at developments in KwaZulu and condemning the violence, repression and mal-administration taking place there. Natal Coastal Region of the Black Sash has actively supported Lamontville and Hambanati residents in their struggle against incorporation into KwaZulu and against the brutal activities of Inkatha in these townships. Prof Schlemmer, on the other hand conducted an insubstantial and now discredited survey which was used by Chief Buthelezi to campaign for incorporation.

We believe that the Black Sash is in fact very critical of many of the structures which Mr Kane-Berman and Prof Schlemmer seek to uphold and that it was highly misleading that our magazine should have reflected their views to the predominating extent that it did.

The majority of members supported the statement, which was presented at a general meeting of Natal Coastal on May 25.

'Voluntary' removals á la Viljoen

The people of Mathopestad are going to move, says Dr Gerrit Viljoen. Yet in February he told the outside world that the policy of forced removals was under review. Communities will only be moved if they are willing, he said. In the case of Kwa Ngema, Viljoen appointed a 'leader' who is prepared to do that.

How's he going to wangle it in Mathopestad?

According to Black Sash information he's trying to organise a 'voluntary' removal of tenants, squatters and others to justify a forced removal of the people who actually own the ground. ETHEL WALT explains.

On February 1 Dr Gerrit Viljoen told foreign correspondents that all forced removals would be suspended pending a review of the whole resettlement policy. The euphoria which greeted this announcement proved to be short-lived.

On April 9, in reply to a question by Mr Peter Soal, Dr Viljoen stated that Mathopestad would be removed 'in consultation with the residents because it is in the interests of all parties concerned.' No policy review, just a casual reply to a question.

No change, except perhaps in the rhetoric.

It was Dr Viljoen, of course, who claimed that the Mogopa removal was a 'negotiated' one, blandly glossing over the armed police and bulldozers.

In Mathopestad itself, heavy pressure is being put on the people to agree to move. Every effort has been made to win over John Mathope (the uncle and adviser to young Chief Solomon Mathope). He's had an invitation from the magistrates of Korsten and Rustenburg to 'come and have a drink'. He has politely but adamantly refused these blandishments, as well as invitations to go and see Onderstepoort, the resettlement area near to Sun City.

On March 11 a truck belonging to a neighbouring farmer, Mr C Bothma, was driven into Mathopestad to collect people willing to go and see Onderstepoort. Only 29 people, all of them tenants or people given refuge at Mathopestad, agreed to go. They were driven to nearby Boons station where they were met by Cooperation and Development officials and transferred to the waiting bus. One of the residents collaborating in the removal has since collected names of people said to be willing to move. However, many of those enumerated claimed

subsequently that their names were included without their consent.

These names were conveyed to the deputy minister, Mr Wilkens, and on April 18 the SABC news announced that a large number of the Mathopestad people had expressed their satisfaction with the new place and agreed to go.

In response to this, Chief Solomon and the six headmen called a Kgotla meeting to gauge the feeling of the community. The meeting was scheduled for 9 am on April 20. Both magistrates of Korsten and Rustenburg were invited to attend.

At 6 am on the same morning four buses arrived to collect people to go and see Onderstepoort. Renewed efforts were made to persuade John Mathope and the headmen to board the buses. They again refused but about 150 people agreed to go. Most of them were tenants, temporary residents, some school children, and, it is alleged, workers brought in from surrounding farms.

At the tribal meeting, it was stressed that while tenants were welcome to remain at Mathopestad, they were under no pressure to do so. Those who wished to remain were asked to sign a petition to that effect, and residents unable to be at the meeting were to be canvassed later.

How much influence will this have on government policy, which is elastic enough to adapt to all circumstances? Dr Viljoen has pledged to move black communities only 'if the leaders agreed'. In Kwa Ngema where the residents are solidly resisting removal, a compliant chief has been appointed as 'leader' and the government will negotiate only with him. But at Mathopestad, the leaders are angrily referred to as 'stubborn old men' and the removal is to go ahead 'in consultation with the residents'. It is a no-win situation, except for the government.



Chief John Mathope signs against the removal from Mathopestad
photo: Gill de Vlieg

PRESS STATEMENTS

The Black Sash resolves:

MINIMUM WAGE

Black Sash condemns Zac De Beer's call for the scrapping of the minimum wage.

This move has been welcomed by the business sector as a solution to skyrocketing inflation, and as a move towards the creation of a free economy.

As an organisation committed to justice we believe all people have the right to work and to earn a living wage.

It is interesting to note that the call for the scrapping of the minimum wage has come at the same time as business is calling for the relaxation of influx control for urban blacks.

The Black Sash has always called for the removal of influx control, but believes that to scrap the minimum wage at the same time, without providing housing, welfare, education and jobs, will serve to further intensify competition amongst workers for jobs and welfare services. It will also increase the extent of a reserve army of low wage earners.

To scrap the minimum wage at a time of such high unemployment can only lead to a decline in overall living standards. The constantly increasing cost of living will exacerbate this.

Most importantly it is a move to undermine and weaken the trade union movement.

COURT INTERPRETATION

Serious criticism was expressed at the Black Sash national conference of the quality of interpretation currently provided in the courts. Many injustices occur, especially in the criminal courts, where the vast majority of black accused are undefended and have little or no knowledge of law or procedure.

Conference therefore recommends that the present standard of interpretation be drastically improved, that interpreters receive more thorough training than at present, and that ways be sought to introduce a system whereby, in due course, the need for interpretation be abolished and that the proceedings be conducted as far as possible in the language of the accused.

FREE LEGAL AID

The Hoexter Commission recommended that legal aid should be available to all accused in all courts.

The Black Sash Conference, believing that justice is the right of all, recommends that the powers of the legal aid board be extended in order to implement one of the recommendations of the Hoexter Commission, and that further avenues be investigated with a view to providing legal assistance for everyone who needs it in both criminal and civil matters.

DETENTIONS

There were an estimated 1 149 detentions in 1984, the highest number since 76/77. This lays bare the hollowness of the Government's pretensions of consensus rule and reform.

The call for 'Charge or Release' in South Africa is inappropriate because in this society the majority of people are voteless.

They have no say in the formulation of the laws which govern them, do not respect the laws designed to subjugate them nor feel bound by them because to quote a lawyer whose assessment of Section 54 of the Internal Security Act is:

'Any person protesting against any facet of the system whether constitutional, political, industrial, social or economic, even in an entirely passive and peaceful manner, can be arrested and tried for offences of sabotage or subversion. This Act casts the net so wide as to include as criminal and subversive, conduct regarded as perfectly legitimate and lawful in normal societies. It provides the authorities with a useful device to prosecute selectively with no effective safeguards.'

This leads to:

- 1 the criminalising of legitimate opposition
- 2 using the law courts to effectively neutralise opponents who are awaiting trial. (In most cases bail is refused) thus disguising the ever increasing number of detainees
- 3 the courts themselves being used to subvert the Rule of Law while apparently observing the due processes of Law.

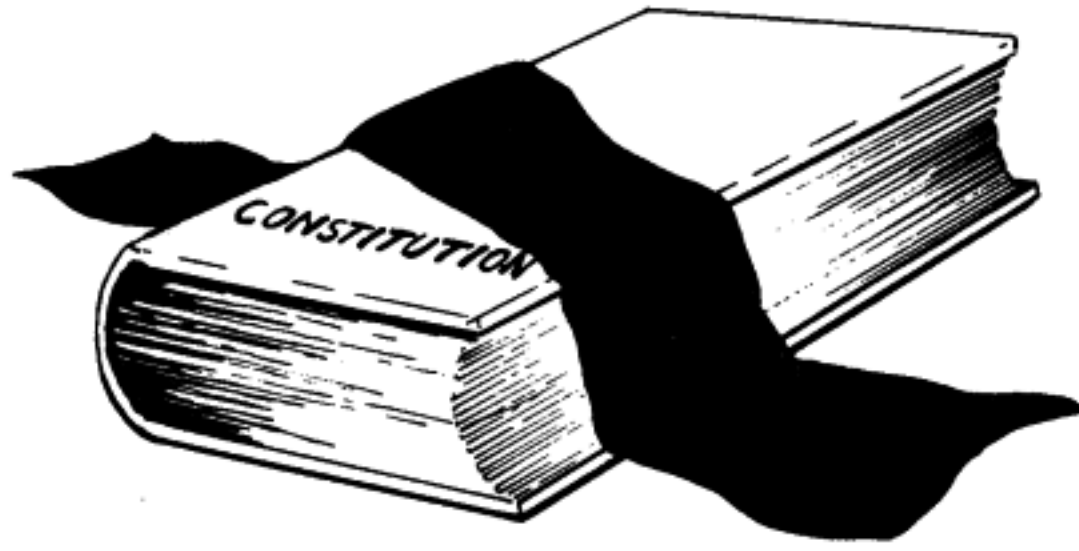
Under these circumstances, the Black Sash rejects the call for 'Charge or Release' and backs the DPSC call for the 'unconditional release' of all detainees and will actively attempt to influence people to take up this call and to demand the abolition of the Internal Security Act in its present form.

RAND DAILY MAIL

The closing of the Rand Daily Mail is one of the tragedies of the current recession. Even worse is the State President's reaction to it which refers to 'a new South Africanism taking control over South Africa' and makes a sinister threat warning the media that it will have to take notice of that spirit.

Is this 'new South Africanism' the repression of dissent, the violence and the chaos prevalent in the country today? How can the South African government speak of a 'new spirit' of national unity in the midst of a state of national crisis precipitated by apartheid policies and practices which offer nothing worthwhile to the black majority and are ruining the economy?

We shall continue to work for a free press contributing to the struggle for a free, united and democratic country.



May 19, 1955 — May 19, 1985

Our task is to find the non-violent ways in which power can be transferred to the powerless — not in any desire for the defeat or subjugation of the presently powerful, but in the true longing for a society in which equal distribution of powers will lead to peace and justice preserved in that creative tension which exists between conflicting interests of equal strength.

Sheena Duncan