

THE BLACK SASH.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE.

CAPE TOWN. OCTOBER 14 - 17, 1958.

PRESENT: Mrs R. Foley National President.
Mrs M. Corrigan National Vice-President

Central Executive: Mrs N. Green Acting Chairman.
Mrs E. Fouche Vice-Chairman.
Mrs H. Hahn Hon. Secretary
Mrs R. Dietrich Hon. Treasurer
Mesdames M.E. Fisher, J. Davidoff, M.I. Britten.

Delegates Mesdames
Border: A.D. Curry
Cape Eastern: A. Pirie, A. Morris, J. Thomson, A.G.D. Czarski, M. Richey.
Cape Western: M.C. Petersen, J. Morris, O. Rowe, H. Spottiswoode,
M.G. Roberts, E. Stott.
Cape Midlands: D. Conroy.
Natal
Coastal: M. Scott, J.F. Hill, Z.M. Herries-Baird, A.G. Haysom.
Natal
Midlands: M.B. Dyer, S.M. Johnson, P.H. Anderson, E.E.M. Russell.
Northern
Transvaal: A.M. Sime, J.W. Pullinger.
Orange Free
State: R. Kruger.
Southern
Transvaal: J. Sinclair, M. Southey, M. Walker, S.E. Broadbent,
R.G. Driver, E.D. Grant.
South Eastern
Transvaal: M. Fourie, T. Ball, P. Garnett, M. Crean.

Observers:

Apologies: Mrs G. Gottlieb and Miss J. White of the Central Executive;
Cape Northern Region;
Lowveld Region;
Mesdames Findlay and Brink of the N. Transvaal Region.

Greetings Mrs Ventress of the Natal Coastal Region.

1. Dedication/.....

1. DEDICATION.

1.

The dedication was read in Afrikaans by Mrs N. Green, and in English by Mrs R. Foley.

2. WELCOME BY MRS M. PETERSEN, CHAIRMAN OF CAPE WESTERN.

1.

APOLOGIES AND GREETINGS.

3. NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

The President's Address was received with acclaim.

Annexure B.

4. A. RULES OF PROCEDURE.

The Rules of Procedure were read by the Hon. Secretary and ACCEPTED.

B. FORMATION OF STEERING AND PRESS COMMITTEES.

1.

Steering Committee:

Mrs Davidoff (Convenor)
Mesdames Spottiswoode (Cape Western) alternate (Mrs Stott)
A.M. Sime (N.Transvaal) A.G. Haysom (Natal Coastal)
A.Morris (Cape Eastern) and the Hon. Secretary.

Press Committee:

Mrs E. Stott (Convenor)
Mesdames J. Davidoff (Central Executive Press Liaison Officer)
A.G. Haysom (Natal Coastal) M. Walker (S.Transvaal)

5. MINUTES.

- a) The Minutes of the Annual National Conference held in Pietermaritzburg on May, 22nd to 24th, 1957 were confirmed and signed.
- b) The Minutes of the Special National Conference held in Johannesburg on June 10th to 12th, 1958, were confirmed and signed.

6. ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES/.....

6. ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES.

2

- a) Matters arising from the Minutes were dealt with in the various Committee and Regional Reports.
- b) Mrs Stott (Cape Western) asked if the matter of Council members' travelling expenses would be considered under this heading or later.
The Treasurer considered that, as Cape Western had withdrawn their resolution on this matter at the Special Conference, the matter was closed.

Mrs Stott accepted this.

7. RESOLUTIONS ON PROCEDURE.

- a) AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that ways and means of implementing resolutions be discussed with each resolution. 2/3.
- b) Cape Eastern proposal that ways and means of policy implementation should be discussed at the National Conference and not be relegated to the National Council WAS WITHDRAWN. 3.
- c) AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that this Conference give priority to discussion of the implementation of the decisions taken at the Special National Conference in June, 1958; and that this discussion take place immediately after Regional Reports. 3-5

8. . . REPORTS.

A. Central Executive:

6-18

i. National Chairman's Report

Annexures C
(i) and (ii)

Mrs N. Green, Acting National Chairman, presented first a factual report of all the Central Executive had done, and then a further report giving a history of the movement since its inception.

Both reports WERE ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

6.

ii. Information and Propaganda Committee.

Mrs N. Green, Chairman of the Information and Propaganda Committee presented her report.
IT WAS ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

6/7

Secretary's Notes
Page.

iii. Parliamentary Committee.

Annexure E.

The report presented by Mrs R. Foley, Chairman of the
Parliamentary Committee, WAS ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY. 7.

iv. Magazine.

8-12

In the absence of the Editor, Miss J. White, the report
was read by the Hon. Secretary. Annexure F.

a) AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that the Black Sash Magazine
continue. 11.

b) AGREED that the Black Sash Magazine should be a
positive instrument of policy. When articles
giving views contrary to those of the Black Sash are
published in the Magazine, then the Black Sash view
should be given in the same issue. 12

c) ACCEPTED WITH ACCLAMATION that Conference record its
appreciation of the work done by Miss Jill White.

The report WAS ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that the old Editorial Board
and the new Editorial Board, after consultation, decide
when the new Editorial Board shall take over. 12

v. Finance

Annexures G.

The Treasurer presented the financial statement, which
was ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

Arising out of the Treasurer's Report 13-18

a) AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL that
the Levy from each Region shall be 4/- per fully
paid up member, for the year 1958/59. 13

b) "The Black Sash" by Mirabel Rogers.
Every Region was fully aware of the moral
responsibility and could be left to the best
they could. 15/16

c) Central Executive Travelling Expenses.
AGREED that the Central Executive be paid first
class fares, meals and beds. 18

8. B. Regional Reports.

Annexures H. 1 to 9.

The Regions commented on points of interest in their reports.

19 - 23

S.E. Transvaal

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that the line of demarcation between the Southern Transvaal and the South Eastern Transvaal be altered to a place agreed upon by Southern Transvaal and South Eastern Transvaal; with the proviso that the National Treasurer approve the financial statement of the South Eastern Transvaal Region.

23

C. Implementation of decisions taken at the Special National Conference, Johannesburg, June 1958.

Stimulating reports were given by the Regions on the implementing of the resolutions taken in Johannesburg at the Special National Conference.

23 - 30

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that these reports were so valuable that Regions compile them and send them as soon as possible to the Secretary.

9. A. RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE REGIONS.

Resolution ia.

Annexure I

The recommendation "that the emphasis of the work of the Black Sash should be on influencing the electorate towards the acceptance of the highest standards of justice, good government and political" morality WAS LOST.

30 - 34

Resolution i.b.

The motion "that as the aims of the Black Sash can be achieved only by enlightening and influencing the white electorate, all Regions shall

- a) direct their energies accordingly; and
- b) at all times exercise care to avoid prejudicing such influence by the association, in the public mind, of the Black Sash with other political organisations whose final aims are very different."

WAS LOST.

34/35
Resolution ii.a/.....

Resolution ii.a

Annexure J,

AGREED that the Black Sash define its attitude to the
Republican issue in South Africa.

36 - 40

Resolution ii.b

AGREED that, while acknowledging that some members are
not opposed, in theory, to Republicanism, the Black Sash,
recognising the realities of the situation at the moment, emphatically
rejects the demand for a Nationalist Republic.

41/42

Resolution ii.c

that the Black Sash declare itself unequivocally opposed
to the establishment of a Republic under this Government WITHDRAWN.

STATEMENT ON A REPUBLIC.

The Black Sash has considered the Republican issue and
emphatically rejects the proposals of the Government
for a Republic, on the grounds that members of the
Government have, through the Senate Act and other laws,
proved that they respect neither the spirit underlying
the present Constitution, nor the freedom of the
individual, nor the rights of minorities.

We believe that any new Constitution, which must command
the allegiance of all South Africans, must safeguard the
rights of all, and should not be brought into being
without the support of the overwhelming majority of all
the people in South Africa. Whether this support is
indeed a fact cannot be ascertained unless the exact
proposals for a new Constitution are made public and
time given for consideration thereof.

44

AGREED that this statement be released to the Press.

Resolution iii.a

RECOMMENDED that a sub-committee be formed to go into
the reform of the South African Electoral Laws, with special
reference to the loaded vote.

45

Resolution iii.b/.....

Resolution iii.b

RECOMMENDED that a sub-committee go into the matter of the secrecy of ballot papers with the people who know the Election Laws well, to find out how to tighten these laws.

Resolution iv.

Annexure K.

RECOMMENDED that the Black Sash investigate the Bantu Education Act and protest against the manner in which it withholds full educational opportunities from both adult and young Africans.

46

Resolution v.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that the Black Sash should investigate and consider the need for ensuring that people arrested in mass for "political" offences (especially in out of the way places) can avail themselves of bail and do what is possible to ensure an adequate defence.

46/47

Resolution vi.a

Annexure L.

RECOMMENDED that the Black Sash should produce informative literature on civic duties and on South African history and its relationship to our present political situation. 47.

Resolution vi.b

The motion that the Black Sash should keep in touch with the Educational League of South Africa for exchange of news, literature etc., was WITHDRAWN BUT RECOMMENDED TO REGIONS. 47.

Resolution vi.c

AGREED that the Black Sash reconsider seriously their role in the proper political education of youth. Only by doing this can we teach our future citizens to think politically for themselves and not be affected by Nationalist propaganda and indoctrination.

48/49.

Resolutions vii. a and b. WITHDRAWN.

49.

Resolution viii/...

Resolution viii.

Proposed and seconded that the Black Sash campaign for a living wage for all South African workers on the ground that such is a vital aspect of national political morality.

Annexure M.

AMENDMENT PROPOSED AND CARRIED ~~that~~ the Black Sash will campaign to remove ~~that~~ factor which perpetuates poverty - the lack of a wage which will ensure that all South Africans have at least a reasonable standard of health and decency.

53

This was in turn amended and the AMENDMENT WAS CARRIED that the Black Sash will work towards the removal of those political factors which help to cause poverty in S. Africa. AGREED.

55.

Resolution ix.

WITHDRAWN.

9. B.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- a) Report by the Constitution Sub-Committee. Annexure N. (i)
- b) The Amendments proposed by the Constitution Sub-Committee were considered and the Constitution duly amended up to Clause 10. Funds. Annexure N. (ii)

Consideration of the Constitution had perforce to cease due to lack of time and it was agreed that the remainder of the Constitution remain as it stood.

The Constitution Sub-Committee strongly recommend that the proposed amended wording for Clauses 11, 12 and 13 be considered as they do not change the meaning or intention of the constitution, but legally are clearer.

AGREED that the proposed "Travelling Fund" be discussed at the next Conference after Regions have considered the relevant figures.

- c) THE AMENDED CONSTITUTION IS ATTACHED. Annexure N. (iii)

10. OFFICE BEARERS.

AGREED by the National Council at the National Council Meeting, Johannesburg, June 13th, 1958, that the Headquarters of the National Council shall be in Cape Western. (Item 3B, page 8 of Minutes)

The following were duly elected:-

President:

Mrs M. Petersen

Vice-Presidents

Mrs R. Foley- Immediate
Past President
Mrs H. Spottiswoode
Mrs E. Stott

Committee Members:

Those elected shall from among themselves appoint an Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer.

Mrs D. Berman
Mrs M. Birt
Mrs N. Day
Mrs M. Smith
Mrs E. West
Mrs B. Willis.

11. SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION.

a. The attitude of the Black Sash to any further imposing of the ban that more than ten Africans may not attend a meeting, in the light of Black Sash meetings being affected. Annexure P.

AGREED that should the work of the Black Sash be affected by a ban on their meetings, the Black Sash may test the validity of the ban in a Court of Law, all other methods having first been tried. 56/59
59.

b. The Declaration of Human Rights and Annexure R. Circular 31. 59

c. Cape Western's proposed amended letter to the Non-European Unity Movement. 59-62

d. The rights/....

Secretary's Notes.
Page

d. The rights of an individual member of the Black Sash to submit a resolution, to the National Conference, which is not backed by her Region. 63.

e. The Black Sash affiliation to the N.C.W. be considered. 64.

f. A proposal that an organisation be formed to see that justice is done. 64/65
Annexure T.

12. GENERAL

A. Next Conference.

Mrs Sinclair, Chairman of the S. Transvaal Region extended an invitation to the Regions, to hold the next Conference in Johannesburg.

B. Thanks.

- i. The Conference made a presentation to Mrs Hahn (Eon. Secretary) and Mrs Dietrich (Hon. Treasurer).
- ii. Mrs Petersen and the Cape Western Region were thanked for their generous hospitality.
- iii. Mrs Morris, Cape Eastern, on behalf of all delegates, moved a special vote of thanks to Mrs R. Foley, outgoing President.
- iv. Mrs Stott, Cape Western, on behalf of the Black Sash, said that up to the present we had had leaders in the organisation who were there through their own initiative and inspiration, and without Mrs Foley and Mrs Sinclair, we would not be here today. She extended a very hearty vote of thanks to them.
- v. Mrs Foley extended her very good wishes to the new Central Executive - and a very special vote of thanks was passed to Mrs N. Green and the outgoing Central Executive.

Mrs R. Foley, National President, declared the third Annual National Conference, and the fourth National Conference, of the Black Sash, CLOSED.

Confirmed: _____

Date: _____

NC/78. Place: _____