

THE BLACK SASH.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE.

CAPE TOWN.

31st OCTOBER, 1960.

- . ATTENDANCE as per Attendance Register.
- . 1. The DEDICATION was read in English by the President, Mrs M. Petersen, and in Afrikaans by the Vice-President, Mrs E. Stott.
 - . 2. The President asked the delegates to stand, in mourning, for two members of the Black Sash - Mrs L. Bredell, who had been a Chairman of the Knysna Branch; and
Mrs Griffith, Hon. Treas.
Lowveld Region.
 - . 3. Mrs K. Robb, Chairman of Cape Western, welcomed the delegates to Cape Town. She, herself, had been disappointed not to be able to go to Durban and to meet the members of the Black Sash from Natal Coastal, but she extended a warm welcome to delegates and anticipated an amicable and rewarding conference.

Miss Windham was in charge of transport and Mrs Morris in charge of the Universal Aunts; both would be happy to assist delegates.

- . 4. The President, Mrs M. Petersen welcomed the delegates and gave her address. (Annexure 1.)
- . 5. Apologies were recorded from:-

Mrs Roberts (Cape W.) who sent greetings and best wishes for a successful conference;
Mrs Sinclair (S.Tvl) who hoped to arrive on Wednesday;
Mrs Findley (Pretoria)
Mrs O'Connor (Bloemfontein) and
Lowveld Region.

S. Transvaal - three members would be arriving late, and the Natal Coastal delegation would be a day late on account of their boat being delayed.

The President thanked Mrs Davidoff for changing her plans and making a special effort so that a member from the S. Transvaal would be present at the National President's opening address; and expressed on behalf of all the delegates sincere sympathy to Mrs Sinclair on the tragic death of her brother.

It was agreed unanimously that a telegram be sent to Mrs Sinclair.

The Central Executive regretted that Lowveld Region had not attended the Conference. The Central Executive regarded that it was very important for a member of the Lowveld Region to attend as there had not been any representation of this Region for two years. The Central Executive had offered to pay the air fare of a representative so that the travelling time expended should not be more than had the Conference been in Johannesburg; they had also offered accommodation and as a last resort had sent renewed invitations to all the members of the region in the hope that someone would be able to attend. None of these efforts had been successful and Lowveld were not present.

6. General Announcements:

Monday at 8 p.m. Symposium on Changes in Political Thinking and possible Political Developments.

Two speakers.

Tuesday at 9 a.m. The third speaker, Mr Stan Uys, who was unable to speak on Monday night.

- Wednesday, 2nd Nov. 6 p.m. Press Party at St Saviours' Church Hall; followed by a Buffet Supper for Press and delegates.
- 8 p.m. Film on the effects of the Group Areas Act. 500 invitations had been sent out and there would be coffee and cakes afterwards.

7. Regional representation for the 1960 Conference:

- (i) Proposed Mrs O'Callaghan, seconded Mrs Johnson and AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that Page 2 of the Constitution be amended by the addition of:-

<u>No. of Paid up Members</u>	<u>Delegates</u>
to 100	1
101 to 200	2

- (ii) With the permission of Conference proposed by Mrs Stott, (C. seconded by Mrs Evans (Natal Midlands) and carried nem. con. (S. Transvaal abstaining) that the S. Transvaal Region have four delegates.

- (iii) AGREED that N. Transvaal were eligible to have a representative.

8. A. Rules of Procedure No.s 1 to 13 were read and ACCEPTED.

- B. A Rough Time Schedule was ACCEPTED. (Annexure 2)
Mrs Johnson (Natal Midlands) asked if a time limit on speakers should not be set. It was agreed if Conference was pressed for time Mrs Johnson would be granted permission to ask for a time limit for speakers again.

9. A. Press Committee: Mrs E. Stott C.E. Press Officer,
Mrs N. Davidoff (S. Transvaal)
Mrs J. O'Callaghan (Natal)
Mrs N. Robb (Cape W.)

- B. Constitutional Sub-Committee to word suitably the decisions made with regard to the Constitution.
Mrs E. Stott and Mrs Dietrich.

10. A. Minutes of the National Conference held in Johannesburg in November 1959 confirmed, with the completion of Para. E. Legal Defence in the index page 3 to read The motion that the Black Sash campaign to make Legal Defence available to all was ~~WITHEDRAWN~~ as it was acknowledged that this was permissible as conducting propaganda, enlisting support and aid for the observance of civil rights. (See page 22 of the Minutes)

Proposed Mrs O'Callaghan, seconded Mrs S. Johnson of Natal Midlands.

- B. Minutes of the National Council Meeting held in Johannesburg in November, 1959 were confirmed.
Proposed Mrs D. Curry (Border) and Mrs A. Pirie (Cape E.)

11. A. Arising out of the Minutes:

- (i) Amendment to Clause 2(i)(b) of the Constitution. AGREED that this be considered under Constitutional Amendments, No. 19 on the Agenda.
- (ii) Page 23 of the Minutes - New Resolutions - Co-operation with other organisations.

11. A. (ii) Page 23 of the Minutes - New Resolutions - Co-operation with other organisations.

The resolution read that since every Black Sash Member is dedicated to the support of democratic principles we should pursue these principles regardless of any criticism we may incur; and should be prepared to co-operate, on specific projects, with other organisations when they are working towards the same end.

Clarification was needed:-

whether the intention had been that the Black Sash would be able to co-operate with one organisation only, and if so, whether the position needed reviewing. (See Circular 47)

Cape Western had interpreted the resolution to mean there could be co-operation with organisations meaning more than one, but Mrs Kobb, on re-reading the resolution and the discussion thereafter appreciated the interpretation of Natal Midlands;

S. Transvaal had interpreted the resolution to mean that if co-operation were with an organisation like Race Relations there could be only one organisation but if with political parties then there must be more than one; Natal Midlands, in the light of their presentation of the resolution at the 1959 Conference felt that co-operation with one organisation was allowed at the discretion of the Regional Council.

The Chairman ruled that it was clear that the intention was that the Black Sash be allowed to co-operate with any one organisation on a specific project.

Further discussion on the principle of co-operation would be permissible under No. 16 of the Agenda - Central Executive - Administration, when Circular 47 would be considered.

- B. Arising out of the Minutes of the National Conference, 1958

(a) to (d) would be considered under No. 18 of the Agenda - Implementation.

12. Matters arising out of the Minutes of the National Council Minutes, 1959:-

- (a) U.P. at Brains Trust Meetings:-

Mrs Stott reported that the Black Sash had continued to try to get member of the United Party to appear on Brains' Trusts but regretted that they had not yet succeeded. In 1959 she had said that if we could get a Nationalist audience we would get a U.P. speaker and, although, at Mooresburg there had not been a U.P. speaker many influential members had queried the absence so that Mrs Stott was convinced that if there were enough Brains Trusts in Nationalist areas we would find that in due course U.P. would be able to take part.

S. Transvaal also reported their lack of success.

- (b) Argus Constitutional Competition:-

Mrs Stott reported that whilst in Johannesburg she had not been able to get the Head Office to agree to do the Competition nationally, and locally it was considered to be a great deal of work with little interest and possibly a large number of unacceptable constitutions. Under the circumstances it was thought advisable to drop the idea.

12. (c) Experts with Blue Prints for a new Constitution:-

Mrs O'Callaghan (Natal Midlands) and Mrs Stott (C.E.) reported that owing to work done on another Constitution Mr Malteno, Prof. Thompson and Dr Brookes were unable to do anything about the Constitution.

There would be further discussion on the Constitution under No. 18 of the Agenda - Implementation.

- (d) The Border Questionnaire had been drawn up and the various questions had gone out to the regions. Border had not carried their project any further on account of the Emergency.

(e) Regional Needs for a Bail Fund:-

Natal Midlands - investigated but as yet no need;

Border and Cape Eastern the same;

S. Transvaal - a great need; not being done by the Black Sash;

Cape Western - a great need and being carried out by the Black Sash.

(f) Gordon Bagnall Play:-

Mrs Stott reported that Gordon Bagnall had asked to be released from his obligation to the Black Sash as Mrs Newton Thompson had asked him to write a play for the Union Day celebrations. The play, "Birth of a Nation" had been a roaring success. The entire theme of the play was the National Convention, and each word had authentically been said. It was significant that over and over again the delegates had urged the very things for which the Black Sash stood; and had underlined what would happen if the vote were denied the blacks and coloured.

The play now belongs to the Oxford University Press who have full rights of reproduction. Mr Bagnall had however stated that he would be delighted if the Black Sash chose to put this play on wherever they had an adequate Rep. Society Mrs Stott strongly recommended that all members read the play which showed up the faults of Union and the necessity for a rigid Constitution.

There had been some talk of getting the views of Olive Schreiner - Closer Union by Olive Schreiner had now been re-printed and was well worth reading.

(g) Photographic Exhibition:-

Mrs Davidoff reported that the S. Transvaal was still very keen on their Photographic Exhibition but there had been no time to do anything.

(h) Union Day Procession:-

Cape Western reported on a very successful Union Day March It had been attended by between six and ten thousand people of all ages, kinds and colours. There had been a final service of re-dedication. The Dedication was read in English by Miss Windham, in Afrikaans by Mr. Gierdien, (a Moslem) and in Xosa by an African priest. The speeches had been given by Ex-Chief Justice Centlivres, Mr Joseph Nkato and the Rev. E. Joorst.

Cape Western were congratulated on the success of the March, conceived by the Hermanus Branch and organised by people from all sorts of organisations. Mrs Anderson and Mrs van Selm were particularly congratulated.

S. Transvaal had had high hopes of staying at the Union Buildings for Union Day and for the meeting of the Cabinet. There had been only about 80 women in the amphitheatre and

in the still silence of the amphitheatre it had been most impressive. Mrs Ballinger and Mrs Sinclair spoke very well but there had been no public. The Dedication had been printed on two huge boards and stood on either side of the entrance. It was noteworthy that there had been several pick-up vans and every woman present had been well photographed. The service had been too short and there were too few people so they had gone down to Church Street.

Natal Midlands had attended the re-dedication service given by the Council in their Black Sashes and had sat in a specially reserved section. The country branches had identified themselves with various interdenominational services.

(i) Plan of Action for Regions:-

to be considered under implementation.

(j) Mrs Sinclair's Polish:

The C.E. had not been able to do anything and during the Emergency this had been returned to Mrs Sinclair.

(k) Signature Tune, Theme song, or Slogan:-

There were no ideas from the regions and it was agreed that this matter be closed. If at any time any member composed a song or slogan the C.E. could be notified.

(l) Stringent Budget for the Central Executive to reduce costs:-

The best had been done and the Treasurer reported that in the last six months of the last year the budget had been reduced by 50%. The rest of the expenditure was reflected in the Financial Statement.

It was pointed that curtailing the budget had meant curtailing propaganda.

13. The National President presented her report:- (Annexure 4)

Adoption moved by Mrs Davidoff, seconded Mrs le Feuvre and accepted with acclamation.

Mrs Davidoff (S. Transvaal) said that while congratulating the National President on her report she wished to make a suggestion that as 1960 would long be remembered as the year of the Emergency and that the Regions should compile an intimate and faithful record of everything they had done and these reports, together with the National President's report should be bound together as a faithful record of the work done by the women of the Black Sash during the year 1960. This was seconded by Mrs M. Fisher (S. Transvaal)

Mrs F. Snitcher (Central Executive) strenuously opposed this as a recommendation for several reasons as not only extremely foolish and extremely dangerous. Their activities had been quite legal but nevertheless were activities which the Government could use as a lever or bludgeon.

Mrs Stott (Central Executive) backed up Mrs Davidoff's idea but considered Mrs Snitcher had good grounds for advising caution. The faithful record might implicate others.

Mrs Davidoff replied that when six members of the S. Transvaal Executive had sought the highest legal opinion

they were urged to keep full minutes and records.

IT WAS RECOMMENDED:-

that an intimate record for 1960 be compiled - but as the voting was 5 for/1 against/17 abstentions the Chairman ruled that this recommendation could not be accepted.

14. Items for General Discussion:-

1. That the opinion of the Black Sash as a whole should be sought regarding the advisability of leaders of the Black Sash contesting seats as candidates for any political party.

IT WAS AGREED that there should be no limitations set at all levels; and
23 for/- against/1 abst.
that there should be no stated resolution.
9 for/6 against/9 abst.

2. Pass Laws, with special reference to:-

- (a) December 1st, after which all African women must carry reference books:-

- (i) Mrs Stott (Central Executive) reported that the Central Executive had written to the national organisations of Commerce, Industries, charitable organisations and welfare organisations as well as the Dutch Reformed Churches, on a national level, asking them to use their influence to see that Pass Laws, in so far as they affect African women should not be applied. The letters were available for the Regions for this should be followed up at a regional level.

- (ii) Mrs Stoy (Cape Western) had suggested that people should be challenged to defend the Pass Laws and should be challenged to public debate.

- (iii) The sponsoring of a series of advertisements or an advertisement showing with cartoons and suitable legends what has happened to African women. Various members of Cape Western had tried to formulate a series of cartoons just prior to date after which women must carry reference books showing what could happen to them. Some were run in the press but were discontinued as it was felt there was not sufficient impact. Other Regions could try.

Mrs Davidoff (S. Transvaal) said that very recently at a meeting of the 14 organisations she had been told that the African women have taken Reference Books and she wondered how effective it would be working against the books. Would it not be more effective to work for the abolition of the Pass Laws.

Mrs Spottiswoode (Central Executive) reported that Prof. Olivier had stated that SABRA had asked for the total abolition of reference books for African women.

In reply to a question from Mrs Fisher (S. Transvaal) it was given that the Chambers of Commerce replied that they had already made potent representation and it would not serve any further purpose to do more; the Chamber of Mines, and Rotary had not replied. A copy of the article from Die Burger had been attached; and

It was understood that the reason why the date for the books had been postponed was because so much pressure had been brought to bear from within the Nationalist party.

Mrs Robb (Cape W.) told of a regular series of articles

showing how the laws had been tightened up in the Cape V. The reporter had listened to cases at the Bail Fund office; followed cases of youngsters and women being endorsed out and then from the police courts investigated the sorts of fines etc. The Editor had promised an article per week but last week there had been three articles - or rather three human stories.

Mrs Curry (Border) asked if the information could not be used in letter form as the public read the letters in preference to articles and also it was easier for Border to get a letter published word for word than having an article distorted.

Mrs Pearce (Cape V) told of 85 families being endorsed out - there was quite literally no legal place where they could go. She proposed a concrete offer to the government that they would take a family to wherever the government says they are legally entitled to be; they would have a photographer take pictures of the packing up; of a night on the way; and of the place where they are to settle - probably bleak and bare. This would immediately be followed by a family who have nowhere to go legally.

Mrs Robb said that they visualised starting with the publicity - they were prepared to pay for a whole family provided that the government guaranteed a place, a school and employment. She felt that if this scheme did go wrong it could affect the whole Black Sash.

Mrs Stett feared it might look to Africans as if the Black Sash were ready to support the removal of Africans out of the Cape. She felt it would be wiser to concentrate on the families who have nowhere to go.

Mrs de Kuyper (Cape V.) thought the officials were caught in a trap and Mr de Wet Nel should be the target.

Mrs Robb proposed and Mrs Stoy (Cape V.) seconded that Cape Western be allowed to go ahead with their idea.

The principle WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mrs Davidoff suggested that the human interest story be developed through the personal columns - "William where are you? You haven't been home for two days." and so on and on until the whole story is revealed;

that two members of the S. Transvaal write in satirical form what happened to Africans; and

that when youths disappeared into reformatories the family be paid ~~xx~~ their expenses for going to see their son.

- (b) A suitable demonstration by White women of sympathy with African women who are separated from their families.

Mrs Stett (Central Executive) outlined her scheme for a scheme of self-sacrifice to bring home to the African women particularly that we have a fellow feeling; a gesture of identification which should make the Africans feel a great warmth.

Mrs O'Callaghan felt this type of action would be well understood by the Indians particularly, and the Africans and although Mrs S. Johnson (Natal Midlands) agreed personally it was a wonderful idea, she feared ridicule of the Black Sash.

Mrs Curry (Border) felt that the bare statement in the Agenda had not made for understanding by her region and although she personally was prepared to accept the scheme she did not know if she would have the backing of her Region.

Mrs Pirie (E. Cape) was against the scheme as she felt it would not have any impact on those on whom Mrs Stott wished to make an impact. It would fall flat and the Black Sash would be ridiculed and be labelled as cranks.

Mrs Snitcher (Central Executive) disagreed. She asked who the people were on whom the Black Sash was trying to make an impression. This was a fine way to show the Africans there were people who cared about them. Africans had a very cogent feeling that no one ~~wants-te~~ cares about them and that no one wants to help them. We may be courting ridicule but amongst the majority only admiration and support.

Mrs Stott did not want a vote on the principle but moved and Mrs O'Callaghan seconded

that the Black Sash lend support to a group of its members who wish publicly to deny themselves for a ~~peried~~ specified period in order to identify themselves with the sufferings of African women, caused by the Pass Laws.

Mrs O'Callaghan, in seconding, said there were two psychological reasons for ridicule - fear and guilt.

RESOLUTION ACCEPTED 9 for/6 against/9 abstentions.

The Chairman felt that the item on the agenda asking for discussion on "a suitable demonstration by White women of sympathy with African women who are separated from their families" did not give any kind of idea to the regions of what has been proposed. Some members may not like that form of demonstration and delegates have no directive. She, therefore ruled that the regions take back this resolution (given above) which has been passed by 69 votes for/6 against/ 9 abstentions. The point had been made that some regions had no idea of what the original item of agenda meant and thus their delegates had no idea how the regions wanted them to vote. Therefore the delegates were to take back the resolution, discuss it fully with their regions and write back to the Central Executive, BY THE 15th DECEMBER, giving the opinion of the region.

It would be helpful if the reply incorporated reasons why the regions were for or against the scheme as this would give a better overall picture.

Mrs Stott asked that when delegates were putting her scheme to their regions they stated specifically that the group wished publicly to deny them lives of home comforts - meaning home, husbands, children, luxuries and their ordinary good food.

- (c) Under Section 23 of the Urban Areas Act Africans may have families introduced if there are local facilities for them, e.g. housing etc. Owing to the Eiselen Line policy, these facilities may not be provided in the Cape Western area. It is suggested that the Black Sash should try to do something to change this.

Mrs Stott (Central Executive) said that in the rest of the country the Government produced houses, schools etc, but because of the Eiselen Line policy whereby Africans are to be removed from the Cape W. housing schemes etc are pretty well at a standstill. There was nothing in Section 23 that specified that African families might not be allowed in the area if there were facilities. Therefore if someone produced houses, schools etc then the Govt could not prevent Africans moving in. She thus wanted, particularly in the Cape, to get people to provide facilities which the Govt wont provide and then the onus would be on the Government to stop these people. To some extent this was a publicity stunt but

but also we could be getting on with a scheme for getting houses for Africans.

Mrs Spottiswoode (Central Executive) said that in Stellenbosch the Native Service Levy had not been used and the way to do Mrs Stott's scheme would be to go to the big employers and find out if, in fact, the Levy was being used for housing when the housing was so inadequate. They could then bring pressure to bear on the authorities.

Mrs Willis (Central Executive) pointed out that the only places where Africans could live were Nyanga and Langa.

Mrs Snitcher (Central Executive) pointed out that the authorities were completely bound by the Eiselen Line policy and since 1952 there was no hope ever of getting permission to build houses. If we did get the capital, how were we to implement the scheme. The Native Service Levy closed because £½ million collected by the authorities was lying idle - money meant for the provision of services for Langa and Nyanga. The way reply is to put pressure to reverse the Eiselen Policy Line

Mrs Stoy (Cape W.) endorsed everything Mrs Snitcher had said. The only thing to do was to get the departmental policy reversed. If Mrs Stott's idea of attacking an administrative ruling was followed then the result would be that these duties would be taken away from the local authorities and given to the central Government. Therefore the only way to work was to remove the Eiselen Line policy.

Mrs Evans (Natal Midlands) said this idea was not a new one. In Natal they had started an Utility Coy after a deputation to the City Council. Thereafter there were 59 steps and ten different authorities to consult - and she wondered if Mrs Stott had looked into all these difficulties.

Mrs Stott asked for an endorsement of her scheme, to raise money for local facilities for Africans, so as to show up and expose the Government. THIS WAS CARRIED. 19 for/4 against

(c) Any other special points for discussion:

Mrs S. Johnson (Natal Midlands) said that this was to be Family Year - devoted to improving Family Life and she suggested that the Black Sash could take advantage of this - e.g. how African Family Life was not being nurtured.

The following suggestions were made:-

- (i) In Natal co-operation with the Women's Institute who were carrying out the Family Life year - speakers to offer to speak on life among the Africans;
- (ii) Co-operation with several organisations - e.g. if there were a Show then we could have a stand showing African Family Life;
- (iii) Mrs Stott's scheme of self-denial could be tied up with this - and following on her scheme women could practice some form of self-denial and contribute that to African families - e.g. their meat ration;
- (iv) A formal protest from the Black Sash ~~that~~ on the principle that the Government has considered White families only in their Family Life Year. The N.C.W. in Cape Town had refused to co-operate as only White families were to be included, and they were informed that there would be regional schemes for non-Whites.

- (v) The Wellington demonstration could be used to highlight the iniquities of the Government with regard to Family Life:

(v) that there be a national statement on this.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that the attention of all Regions be drawn to the fact that Family Life Year provides an ideal opportunity to spotlight the plight of African families.

Mrs Stoy (Cape W) said that in Cape W. there had recently been a strict tightening up on influx control - started by C.I.D. investigations and resulting in prosecutions of clerks etc. There was an increasing amount of corruption and this made the work of the Black Sash almost impossible because of the stringent control now of influx regulations. There were a number of women being endorsed out who quite literally had nowhere to go. She asked regions if they would go back and check if this same stringency was in their areas for we must try to find some relaxation. The hopelessness, despair and anger was appalling. The matter was urgent and any other region requiring factual evidence could get information from Cape W.

IT WAS AGREED that Mrs Stott and Mrs Stoy, in view of Mrs Stott's interview with Mr de Wet Nel, could fly up to see Mr de Wet Nel with a view to what is actually happening - in view of his intention

4. Need to alert other organisations to special needs where this appears to have been over-looked

From the discussion it appeared that most regions had in fact been doing this and bringing pressure to bear on those institutions which should have been carrying out their duties. Mrs O'Connell (Calaaghan) seconded by Mrs Robb felt we should not have anything down in black and white and we should be extremely ill-advised to have even a recommendation.

IT WAS ACCEPTED by Conference that there are times when it is necessary to bring pressure to bear on other organisations.

3A. The future of the Black Sash, covering the following points.-

- (i) Whether the work which the Black Sash is constituted to do is being undertaken by any other group:-

Mrs Stott (Central Executive) said that it had been her great pleasure to tour the regions of the Black Sash and she had found many cut off and inactive and because they had found nothing in their area that they thought was Black Sash work. This has further been highlighted by a memo from Lowveld who feel the Black sash should cease. It was important to make members realise that the work done by the Black Sash was not being done by anyone else.

The following emerged from the discussion:-

- a. The Black Sash was doing work no other organisation was doing;
- b. it was establishing bridges between all sections of political thinking;
- c. it was invaluable in the field of making contacts with the non-whites - the incredible work of the Paarl/Wellington Branch had proved that people had no conception of what was going on in their towns - not even those responsible for Africans realised what was happening;
 - the successful experiment in consultation carried out by Mrs Morris and Mrs Welsh in the S. Transvaal; (report attached)
 - the multi-racial tea-parties of Natal Midlands;
 - the work of the regions during the Emergency when far from ensuring no contacts between Black and White the Government by their actions, brought about contacts never dreamed of.
- d. it was an important agent of education - educating members and the public not only through propaganda but also as a result of the practical experience gained in its varied activities;
- e. it was absolutely vital in a country where politics were divorced from ethics - someone to uphold and maintain the duality between politics and ethics;
- f. it had reached the stage when the Black Sash could investigate, negotiate and initiate something but did not necessarily have to carry it through. It was our strength that we could dynamite groups into action and then retire gracefully - e.g. The Black Sash had started the Sharpeville Emergency Fund and handed that over to the Defence and Aid; and to the Red Cross. It had started a special Vigilance Committee and handed that over to an Education committee;

IT WAS AGREED that never had the Black Sash been so needed, reports on implementation made the delegates realise this fully; 1960 had been a testing year and the Black Sash had come out very well and it was significant that these regions most intimately in contact with the Emergency had not only proved to themselves and the public that they were doing work which could not be done by any other organisation but also these regions had attracted new members. In certain outlying areas where there has not been so much activity there was this feeling that the Black Sash must pack up - Lowveld, N. Transvaal, S.E. Transvaal and one country branch in Natal Midlands; but against this was the formation of two new Branches in the Border, new members on the Committee and increased membership; increased membership in the S. Transvaal, renewed interest in Natal Midlands (due to Mrs Stott's visit) and great activity in Cape W.

were

Delegates/urged to make their members realise the need for the Black Sash; to encourage more meetings in country areas; the necessity for recruiting drives; the value of meetings for young people; and to try to include Afrikaans women in their experiments in consultation, especially women from the missions and in the smaller dorps.

The Chairman pointed out that there were vast potentials, whole new approaches and many interesting ideas with which to instil new life into the Branches. Mrs Davidoff told of the Editor of the London Observer who had asked for an article on women's activities and when he got the article asked about the Black Sash for in his assessment

they were doing a particularly valuable job.

(b) The possible effects on the Black Sash of the advent of new political parties:-

Natal Midlands - only effect was one small country branch, Ladismith had decided to close down after thanking the Black Sash for conditioning their political thought;

S. Transvaal - there had been additions to the ranks of the Black Sash from the newly formed Progressives;

Cape I. - those working hard in the new parties were working even harder in the Black Sash; the Progressive Party, after being antagonistic now admitted there was a lot of work the Black Sash could do that they could not - for we with our varieties of parties had a greater public and we had more facilities for practical work. The result was more appreciation of the Black Sash by the Progressives.

Eastern Cape - a few solitary members in a few Branches had felt the Progressive Party would take the place of the Black Sash, but it had been pointed out that the Black Sash was doing work no political party could do. There was no sign of the National Union.

Border - no repercussions. There were new members. They were doing a lot of political education and made the women realise what the Black Sash was doing. No mention of the National Union.

Cape Midlands - Mrs Conroy said that the value of the Black Sash in her area was that they could speak as outside a party and could get across single points unbiassed by party political standpoint.

Mrs Stott commented on the significance that the National Union consisting preponderantly of dissident Nationalists, seemed to be mainly in the Western Cape. At Mooresburg the people had been glad to hear Japie Basson. She reminded delegates that the new parties were only too happy to save themselves organisation and liked to use someone else's platform. The Black Sash should take advantage of this and it might in time force the U.P. and then the Nationalist party to take part.

c. In general, what are the possible political developments and how should the Black Sash react and plan:-

Mrs Stott felt that the extremists had a group pushing and pushing for more extreme legislation. A dissident group was very strong, especially in the Cape, but not yet sufficiently at home in any other group to leave the Nationalists. This was obviously something to be prayed for and helped. If the Nationalist Party did not split then we could expect one totalitarian measure after another. If the extremists in the Transvaal continued to have control there were few of us at this Conference who would not be jail in the foreseeable future.

We must do all we can to try and help bring about the split in the Nationalists. There are a great number dissatisfied - the D.R.C. is seething within itself with unrest about the Pass Laws etc., SABRA Die Burger - there were many indications. A change there would make all the difference and make an incredible difference to the degree of suffering of the non-white. If the Eiselen Line Policy continued to be enforced there would be endless misery, frustration and despair.

With regard to the United Party - from her sources, the platteland held out not the remotest hope of the U.P. winning the election in two years time.

The Progressives, she thought, hadn't a hope of winning 103 seats and unless they could win 75 seats in three years time could not put their useful policies into practice, therefore they had to get support from those who were now voting Nat; and they had to convert these in a spirit of lets get together and solve these problems.

The Liberal Party had more or less had to write off white support since the formation of the Progressive Party, and in the blacks was finding it increasingly difficult to wean the black people away from black organisations. The blacks were disorganised and distressed and no significant organisation emerged. In Durban the A.N.C. still had the greatest hold of the people but the people had not yet risen from their despair. In the Transvaal the P.A.C. and A.N.C. were about evenly matched. The vast majority were not organised, but underneath is a seething discontent. For the first time the Liberal Party were not given permission to hold a meeting in the Location this was not only pig-headedness on the part of the authorities but in Mrs Stott's view there was sufficient evidence that it would have been dangerous.

The organisation of the non-whites is temporarily shattered, underneath discontent is seething but coalescing; that is why there are tales of violence and arson and desperate actions recommended by a desperate, disorganised and frustrated bunch of people.

If we are looking to the whites for a change then we must force a wedge between the Nationalists - but not in a spirit of "I told you so" If looking to the non-white for a change - she did not see any non-white organisation with enough power to cause a change. If this goes on for long the government will become more oppressive and there will therefore be more resentment, anger and hate, and this is what Mrs Stott foresaw if we did not force in the wedge. Therefore we must continue to do all we can in political education - especially of the Nationalists. On the other side, step up all we can, our activities with regard to Group Areas, Pass Laws and Job Reservation to help the people keep such rights and liberties as they have left. We must do everything from small groups to larger Conferences. We must ourselves try to get others round a Conference table to sort out our difficulties.

In the subsequent discussion the following points of view were expressed:-

1. Nationalist opinion was beginning to crystallise among large sections of Nationalists and this was extending to the Transvaal; now was the time for the Black Sash in the Transvaal to go to the Nationalists and see what sort of common ground they could find and then to work from there;
2. Whilst accepting that it was necessary to drive in this wedge, the method depended on the area where one lived. A dissident Nationalist had never been found by Mrs Pirie in Port Elizabeth, the only intellectual Nationalists were the domineers who preached against the English and the non-whites and even allowed pamphlets to be distributed outside their churches. The farmers could not be approached and the factory workers were impossible. Guidance was sought on how to get at these types. S. Transvaal & Border felt the same way. In Natal Midlands most of the Nationalist populations were railway workers and a large number of voting ciphers - making it difficult to get on a co-ordinating basis.
3. It was equally necessary to convert the English-speaking to cut across all groups and group interests - that we do not think only of the black man but rather that the good of the black man is also the good of the white man;
4. We must get out of the friend/foe mentality;
5. Driving a wedge is no easy task and required pertinacity and perseverance - but it has to be done;
6. That driving a wedge between the Nationalists is not the way. Because of the banning of various organisations it is true

there was not a definite leadership and there was no nucleus but it was coming and the nucleus was a black nationalism - nationalism had such an appeal because of the white nationalism. The Black Sash has proved by fact that there were white people ready to work with the black to bring about a change in the future. There was no other way but to work for an equitable multi-racial society.

7. It was not a problem of two groups - English and Afrikaans, but a problem of Africa and the emergent states of Africa, and the problem must be seen in the large perspective of the world scene. S. Africa did not exist in a vacuum but on a continent in a world therefore the Black Sash must think more largely. Nations were struggling for birth and the solution would not be found in a split in the nationalist party.
8. There was a danger of becoming less critical of the Nationalists in our efforts to make contact and in becoming less critical and in the fear of hurting our per Nationalists there is the danger of compromise - albeit quite unconsciously.
9. After considerable discussion on ways and means, it was AGREED that we invite a speaker to address this Conference on the subject of the moral aspects of both passive and active resistance to unjust laws. The speaker would be invited for 9 a.m. on Wednesday and this matter would be left open until after his talk. (Unanimously)

3A. 1 (d) In view of the suggestions for future activity etc it was obviously accepted that there was a long term need for the existence of the Black Sash.

2. The policy to be followed should there be another State of Emergency at any time:-

Proposed Mrs O'Callaghan, seconded Mrs Davidoff and
AGREED UNANIMOUSLY

that in the event of a State of Emergency being declared the Black Sash should continue with all its normal work in so far as it remains legal, including public meetings, work with non-whites and stands, even with limited numbers.

Proposed Mrs S. Johnson (Natal Midlands) seconded Mrs Robb (Cape W)
AGREED

that, in the event of another emergency, members should do all in their power by means of general discussion, ca. stickers etc to keep the public aware of the fact that the country is still in a state of emergency.

10 for/2 against/10 ab.

4. See page 10 of Minutes.

5. A. Our attitude to putting out information overseas

- (i)(a) IT IS AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that it is a good thing to give out factual information overseas; and
- (b) AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that all interviews or statements for overseas use, in the name of the Black Sash, should be subject to the approval of the governing body;
- (ii) ACCEPTED that it was not possible to prevent members or non-members speaking to the public in the name of the Black Sash but where the Central Executive knows of such speakers, information will be given to them and they will be told of the pitfalls.
- (iii) When wishing to bring pressure to bear on S.A. organisations:-

Item 14

- (iii) a. If through the means of publishing factual information overseas, then covered by resolutions (i)(a) and (b) on page 14;
- b. if a local organisation does not fulfil its function, and after all reasonable efforts locally have failed, then the Black Sash should be able to go over the head of the local body. LOST 4 for/7 against/14 abst.
- 5 B. ACCEPTED UNANIMOUSLY that the Black Sash approves appealing privately for Funds overseas to promote the ideals of the Black Sash and to help the education programme.
5. C. Discussion unnecessary.
5. D. Circular No.47.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that Regions be given autonomy to interpret the resolution on Co-operation with other Organisations as they consider best for their Regions at any specific time.

The resolution reads:-

that since every Black Sash member is dedicated to the support of democratic principles we should pursue these principles regardless of any criticism we may incur; and should be prepared to co-operate, on specific projects, with other organisations when they are working towards the same end.

(See also page 3 of these Minutes)

Mrs Curry (Border) proposed and Mrs Stoy (Cape W.) seconded that the Central Executive resolution be amended to "that the Black Sash Sash accepts the Declaration of Human Rights" AGREED. 20 for/6 against.

The Chairman stressed that acceptance of the Declaration meant that the Black Sash shall strive, by education, to promote respect for the principles laid down in the Declaration and that it work towards securing the effective recognition and observance of these principles, for it stated in the Preamble to the Declaration of Human Rights that this was a common standard of achievement for which to strive by teaching and education.

Education - co-operation in any campaign in each area against the Education Advisory Board.

It was agreed that this was not a new resolution but more in the nature of an implementation of old policy.

The Chairman (Mrs Stott) said that she had found it the greatest difficulty in finding new resolution, when compiling the agenda. Even the resolution on the Declaration of Human Rights was not really a new resolution, some years ago it was accepted as a yardstick by which to judge Black Sash behaviour.

Proposed Mrs Lirie, seconded Mrs Gardiner (Cape E.) and AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that the Black Sash go into the question of paid labour convict labour; and that paid convict labour should not compete with free labour, to which it offers unfair competition.

This sort of thing inextricably tied up with Pass Laws, and Influx Control;

- c. Must also be careful of doing a grave disservice to the convicts;
- d. important to bring pressure to bear on government that convict labour be used on government projects only, to find out exactly how much un-employment is caused, & to investigate the drift to the towns caused by this enforced unemployment.
- d. The State has a duty to the convict - not only of punishment but also of rehabilitation by coming into free labour market. Only a strong African Trade Union could control this. AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that this be recommended with the resolution - (i) The lack of Trade Unions; and (ii) the task of rehabilitation.

Proposed Mrs M. Fisher and seconded Mrs Davidoff (S. Transvaal) and AGREED UNANIMOUSLY-THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED:-

that as the value of visits to the Native Commissioners' Courts has been proved, and as it is accepted that the presence of observers serves a purpose in making officials aware of public concern,

- (a) that this work be carried on;
- (b) that asking questions of the officials and writing to the Press should be encouraged;
- (c) that other Regions should be encouraged to develop this activity;
- (d) that the Black Sash should ask questions relating to the use of secret courts, youth camps, and the fate of non-political detainees in order to expose the extent to which information on these and other matters is being withheld from the public;
- (e) that the Black Sash, should go into the advisability of having Prisoners Friends and/or Legal Aid Officers at all C Native Commissioners' Courts.

A memorandum on Vagrant African Boys and Youth Camps, sent in by Pretoria, was read.

Proposed by Mrs S. Johnson, seconded by Mrs O'Callaghan and RECOMMENDED UNANIMOUSLY

that the Black Sash should write to the Minister of Justice demanding an assurance that all political detainees, who have been released without any specific charges being preferred against them, will not be penalised in any way by the stigma of their detention in jail.

Dedication:

The dedication was re-worded as per Annexure, with the addition of the words "So help us, God in whose strength we trust."

17 for/9 against.

the motion for

the deletion of "that history and our children will defend us" was LOST 11 for/13 against/1 abst.)

16. Central Executive Reports:-1. Hon Treasurer

- (a) Mrs Willis (Hon. Treasurer) presented the Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Account for year ended 31st March, 1960. Annexure 7.
- (b) After the Treasurer had answered the queries raised by the delegates the adoption of the Report was proposed by Mrs Grant (S. Transvaal) seconded Mrs S. Johnson (Natal Midlands) and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. The C.E. was congratulated on surplus for the year.
- (c) A special tribute was paid to Mrs Willis who was thanked for work as Treasurer and for the Black Sash; special thanks were recorded for the auditor and a letter would be sent from Conference.
- (d) Proposed by Mrs O'Callaghan, seconded Mrs Johnson that the action taken by the Central Executive during the Emergency to safeguard the funds of the Black Sash be ratified. AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.
- (e) Proposed Mrs Johnson (Natal Midlands), seconded Mrs leFeuvre (Cape W) and AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that the arrangement as at present continue and that the funds remain in the special account as approved by the governing body.
- (f) The Treasurer presented her Report for the first six months of 1960. Annexure 7A. Treasurer's Circular T.21. The statement of Income and Expenditure was NOTED.
- (g) Arising out of this report:-
- i. Cape W. pointed out that although they were credited with 1297 members on page 5 of the Report, in actual fact they had only 1146, the balance of the numbers being made up by late payments.
 - ii. As their balance sheet had been in order N. Transvaal had been granted permission to close down as a region. In terms of Clause 8(i) of the Constitution the Central Executive had re-arranged the areas so that Pretoria was now a Branch of the S. Transvaal. RATIFIED.
- Mrs Willis reminded the Regions of the two isolated Branches in the N. Transvaal, namely, Munnik and Bandolierskop and urged that reports etc be sent them regularly.
- (h) AGREED that the Levy for the _____ year be determined under No.19.
- (i) Proposed Mrs Pirie that the annual subscription be raised to £1 seconded Mrs Willis; LOST 2 for/22 against.
Proposed Mrs Gardiner (Cape E.) seconded Mrs O'Callaghan (Natal M) that the subscription be 10/- this to include magazine subscription. Mrs Davidoff felt that it was our job to see that every member at least has our Magazine. LOST 5 for/11 against/
- (j) AGREED that T.18 the expenditure of the Magazine be ⁴ abst. considered under Magazine Report.
- (k) The magnificent book, **The Road Ahead**, edited by Mrs Spottiswoode, was being re-printed and Regions were advised that orders could be submitted, at the same price as before. The guarantor had not been called upon for money and had agreed to stand guarantor for the reprint. The £150 would be paid back direct to him and thereafter the profit would accrue to the Black Sash.

2. Magazine:-

The delegates read the Magazine report presented by Mrs Berman.

- (a) Mrs Berman said that she had not known that the S. Transvaal took so many Magazines in excess of their membership as she would have made special mention of this in her report.

- (b) She regretted the lack of material and commented on the difficulties she met in getting material - she had heard fascinating reports and entertaining anecdotes at this Conference and asked all Regions to submit material.
- (c) Views of the Regions:-

Natal Midlands: The Region was united in their praise for the Editor; they had been very thrilled with the special edition on Education and had distributed 82 copies. Their members had urged that the Magazine continue monthly, part topical and part reports. They suggested that many old articles worthy of re-printing be used again. If it were not possible to produce the Magazine monthly (which they would like even with cheaper paper) then they would like it bi-monthly or quarterly. Greater use could then be made of regional reports which should be circulated amongst the Branches.

They moved a very sincere vote of thanks to the Editor.

ACCEPTED WITH ACCLAMATION.

Border: There was not much to add. They liked the Magazine monthly but but this was up to the Editor, and material from the Regions. The Education issue had been a great success General Distribution - practically all the members got the Magazine and it was distributed to the libraries etc.

Border Bulletin came out every two months.

Eastern Cape would like the Magazine monthly as they realised how valuable it was to the country branches; during the Emergency they felt completely cut off; but they did realise the difficulties Distribution - street sales had been discontinued during the Emergency but they would be re-started. They sold in the various suburbs so a good cross section of Port Elizabeth received the Magazine. Her region had recorded a special vote of thanks for the special edition, but protested strongly against the Central Executive for not allowing them to send copies to the headmasters of the schools. These were the sort of people who should have had this edition, especially as principles and school inspectors had asked for them.

The Chairman pointed out that it was not the intention to send our Magazine to those who did not want it or to those to whom the Magazine might cause embarrassment. - especially to civil servants.

Cape W. were in a better position to judge the / net by the Editor and as a result recommended a quarterly production. They did send out a quarterly Newsheet and if need be could step that up.

Distribution - through the Branches;

Outside Sales - this applied only to the special edition;

50 to 60 were sent overseas and to odd people who were not members.

Natal Coastal - would like a /monthly Magazine, if it were at all possible. Support the request for old articles to be re-printed; and were enthusiastic about the Education edition. They had sent copies of this to the heads of schools privately. Distribution - to members who pay, and about 50 copies to libraries, organisations etc.

S. Transvaal - would prefer it monthly but would accept a quarterly issue on special subjects e.g. a Pass Law issue, or on broad issues with a rounded newsletter.

Distribution - left to Branches who also dispose of copies to people outside the Black Sash. They had tried street sales but this had not been very successful.

Their region was very disappointed that there had been no mention of the work done by their region in the Education issue. Mrs Sinclair would like to speak on this when she arrived.

Chairman - there were no reports of activities of the Black Sash in the Education issue.

Proposed Mrs Robb, seconded Mrs Marquard that the Black Sash Magazine be issued quarterly and should be of such quality that

it can be sold to the public as well as to members and that Regions be recommended to produce a regular regional newsletter incorporating news from other regions.

- (b) Proposed Mrs Davidoff seconded Mrs Fisher that the number of issues of the Magazine per annum be left to the incoming governing body. AGREED. 12 for/9 against/3 abst.
- (c) Proposed Mrs Stott, seconded Mrs Marquard that that the cost of despatch of the Magazine be borne by the region receiving the Magazine. LOST 7 for/13 against/4 abst.
- (d) RECOMMENDED that all national statements should in future be included in the Black Sash Magazine. 20 for/1 against/5 abst.
- (e) Proposed Mrs S. Johnson and seconded Mrs O'Callaghan that efforts be made to give the Black Sash magazine editorials Union-wide publicity and with this end in view that SAFA be approached to find out what steps are practicable. LOST. 5 for/6 against/12 abst.
- (f) The Magazine in time of Emergency - the resolution taken under item 14. 3A 2 (page 14 of the Minutes) would apply, i.e. that the Black Sash would continue with its normal work (the magazine) in so far as it remains legal.

g. Administration:

Mrs Petersen said that under the eagle eye of Mrs Willis the Central Executive had cut down stringently and this had affected the amount of printed propaganda. The Central Executive had tried this year more live propaganda - Brains Trusts, visits to Regions etc.

The following points were made:-

- (a) Regions and Branches wanted:-
- i. Visits by the Central Executive - in some areas this had not only re-vitalised existing members but had been a powerful recruiting and converting force;
 - ii. copies of all Regional reports to be sent to the Branches so that the rank and file was kept aware of the many activities of the Black Sash;
 - iii. if it were at all possible - Regions would like additional copies of the reports from other Regions;
 - iv. one section of the Regional report in which news from other regions and the Central Executive was summarised;
 - v. to be notified of national statements; the right of regions to state their objections to any national statement was re-iterated but this objection was of no value if the national statement was not available;
 - vi. S. Transvaal re-affirmed that they did not like many of the national statements because frequently the C.E. did not appreciate different conditions pertaining in different parts of the country;
 - vii. Cape N. in particular, to register their disapproval of the official recognition by the Black Sash of the Declaration of Beliefs by the 69; this was supported by S. Transvaal and Natal Coastal.

The Central Executive gave fully their reasons for their action Mrs Snitcher of the C.E. asked that it be minuted that she had not seen and therefore not approved the press statement, altho' she had approved the letter sent to the 69 commenting on their statement and asking that they prove their statement by arranging co-operating with the Black Sash, who offered to arrange a Round Table Conference with approved leaders, including approved non-white leaders.

Item 16 AGREED to be included in the Press Statement to be issued 2. vii. at the end of the Conference there would be a statement, AGREED that in the Press Statement to be issued at the end of this Conference be included a statement that the Black Sash carefully considered the Appeal of the 69 and reiterated the request for a Round Table Conference made in a private letter to the 69 signatories.

4. Propaganda:

Proposed by Natal Midlands that a letter be drawn up by the Central Executive detailing specific achievements of the Black Sash in the main centres during the past year and stressing the importance of every member continuing to give moral support. Such a letter to be sent to each Branch and circulated to all members past and present.

Mrs. Sinclair (S. Transvaal) proposed an amendment to this

(a) a concise pamphlet giving broadly what our work was and what we had achieved, in headlines. This could be done regionally;

(b) a booklet detailing for the record, and for the public exactly what the Black Sash had achieved.

The S. Transvaal Region were willing to undertake the compilation.

IT WAS AGREED to accept S. Transvaal offer; costs of production would be considered later when the book/booklet was complete.

Mrs. Stott thanked the S. Transvaal and recommended that at the beginning of meetings the speaker give a brief resume of Black Sash activities and achievements. During her tour of the Border she had found, unfortunately only towards the end of the tour, that audiences were greatly interested in the doings of the Black Sash, and it could be of great value in a recruiting drive.

5. Education: The Moorreesburg Brains Trust had been a combination C.E./Cape Western project.

17. Regional Reports:

Mrs. Stott, in the Chair, asked for a solemn undertaking that everyone would read the reports. She always felt, to her great regret that these were prepared carefully but never got to Regional Committees or to the members.

Mrs. Robb (Cape W.) felt that reports should be read and that reports and implementation should be taken at the beginning of Conference. She moved that delegates should have the reports beforehand and that a verbal report should be given and that implementation should be taken at the beginning of the Conference.

Seconded by Mrs. Henderson. AGREED.

15 for 2 Against/4
abstentions.

Discussion on proposed implementation for the future - Taken in conjunction with the Plan of Action.

1. Lectures and Brains Trusts:

A. On Pass Laws:

(i) See Page 21.....

Item 17. Discussions on future implementation:

A. Pass Laws:

- i. AGREED to educate members and the public about the evil effects of these laws, through a campaign to bring to the attention of the public what exactly it means to be subject to the operations of the pass laws. This can not be done satisfactorily by only the distribution of pamphlets or by discussion forums as these latter often reach the converted only. Therefore the Black Sash should undertake a publicity campaign by inserting in newspapers actual cases of hardship caused by the pass laws and quotations made by eminent persons criticising the operations of these laws. The press campaign should if possible be undertaken by experts and illustrated by cartoons. Further, that the Black Sash should publicly challenge upholders of the pass laws to public debates and if these were refused, publicise the fact.
- ii. A play around the Pass Laws. Unkumbaan by Alan Paton was suggested. Mrs Davis to make the initial contact and the governing body to investigate;
- iii. Permission was given to Mrs Stott to go ahead with the making of a film on Pass Laws on the lines of the film on Group Areas. She would find the money. Mrs Stott was warmly congratulated on the excellence of the film on Group Areas; it was strongly recommended as an effective form of propaganda.

B. Poverty:

Cape W. suggested some sort of a Show, various organisations having stalls showing poverty - very visual so that the simplest person could be impressed. It would fit in with Family Life.

C. S. Transvaal recommended a public book review of The Road Ahead with symposiums.

Mrs Spottiswoode suggested an extension of the idea of The Road Ahead - speakers on their wishes for the future. She had already spoken to Prof. Coetzee to ask him if such a meeting was possible. She commended the scheme to the S. Transvaal.

D. Education:

Meetings with parents and P.T.A.s
Mrs Rankin's "Education Charter for the Children of S.A." was tabled. (Annexure 9)

2. Contacts:

A. With non-White:

Cape W. recommended that other Regions start a Bail office, which they found so valuable. During the Emergency they had found no difficulties with Africans - except for the day of the strike, they had continued to come for advice, help or sympathy.

Border recommended their scheme whereby they had given the names of four committee members in the Border Bulletin asking that if any one heard of an African who needed assistance or was in trouble, to telephone them.

Border told of a man they had traced - he had been "lost" in Mafeking for 7 years. With the assistance of an advocate and as a result of persistence they were able to get him home. They put this forward as a guide to other Regions.

S. Transvaal recommended their Experiment in Consultation, and hoped to follow this up with a Women's Multi-racial Conference. Annexure 10.

Implementation for the future:

2. Contacts:

Border questionnaire - sent to all Regions, copies available in the C.E. office.

B. With Nationalists:

Mrs Davidoff presented the idea of a summer school on S.A., our land - climate, antiques, furniture, life in S.A., types of people and how they live. Suggested that she send her scheme to Extra Mural Studies at Wits and Cape Town.

C. With the Youth:

....Sag Transvaal Quiz evenings strongly recommended.

3. Fact finding:

C. Group Areas:

The Association of Durban Women - a liaison advisory committee of women of all races. This type of Committee was well able to go into hardships suffered through Group Areas and able to assist and advise.

D. Courts, Jails and Prisoners:

Mrs Davidoff gave a most inspiring report on an investigation done into prison conditions - she was congratulated on her meticulous document.

IT WAS AGREED that every Region should endeavour to draw up a report of prison conditions in their areas. The reports from each area to be presented in one complete document to M.P.S, Health Officers, Penal Reform, N.C.W., Race Relations, so that these conditions could be exposed and improved. 22 for/2 against/3 abst.

IT WAS AGREED to because there was no other organisation whose specific job it was to investigate prison conditions. Therefore the Black Sash should consider bringing pressure to bear in all ways possible, to see that prison conditions were improved. 20 for/ - /3 abst.

4. Demonstrations:

Cape W. out of experience recommended that it was important to have some sort of statement saying what the stand is.

Multi-racial Conferences:

The C.E. had undertaken to have a Multi-racial Conference immediately after the Emergency;

they would follow up their suggestion to the 69 to assist or organise a Round Table Conference;

they asked what the feeling of Conference would be if the Black Sash were invited to a Multi-racial Conference organised by someone else. It was agreed that it would depend on the terms of reference.

A resolution not to co-operate with C.O.D. on any project WAS LOST. 4 for/17 against/5 abst.

5. Publicity:-

Ways and means of getting National statements in the Press were considered.

7. Members:- IT WAS AGREED to make a special effort to increase membership. 23/....

A letter from the Lowveld Region was read. After a great deal of discussion it was agreed that the Lowveld Region had consistently refused to come to Conferences, in consequence this Conference requested the incoming governing body to send two members to discuss with Lowveld their difficulties and to bring them up to date.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.

3B The role of the Black Sash:

Mrs Sinclair (S. Transvaal) said that the emphasis had always been laid on political morality and she felt we should change the emphasis to freedom and say we were fighting for our freedoms. Stan Uys had pointed out that today we were nearer to a one man state than ever before and never was the struggle for freedom at a more crucial stage.

She briefly reviewed new local ordinances in the Transvaal; in the S. Transvaal Region it had been decided to allocate certain work to certain groups and one group was to watch all affairs connected with local authority.

She had always been a staunch advocate of demonstrations but had reluctantly come to the conclusion that there should be no demonstrations whatever - except on very exceptional occasions, when it should be a great demonstration.

Points raised:-

- i. There might be misconceptions about the meaning of fighting for freedom; and if there could be any misconceptions then we would be very ill-advised to take such a course;
- ii. if we did not fight for freedom we would end up with no freedom at all - freedom was indivisible;
- iii. agreed that demonstrations had lost their force and demonstrations should be kept down until bursting point; when this feeling did "burst" then we might consider a revival of the original convoy to show that there was strength in the Black Sash;
- iv. that the Black Sash should consider a badge giving the multi-racial idea; or should support Archbishop Hurly's idea.
AGREED that the governing body investigate what had been proposed at Durban; /1 against/2 abst.

The Chairman asked for an indicative vote on the proposal that the emphasis in Black Sash phraseology, pamphlets, points of clarification, posters etc be changed from a statement of political morality to an emphasis on human freedoms - freedom is indivisible.

Indicative vote showed 22 for/--

AGREED that the Black Sash agrees with the principle but not with any sort of slogan etc

6 for slogan/11 against
7 abst.

19. Constitutional Amendments:

1. Objects of the Black Sash to be left to the next Conference.
2. Central Executive Status:
 - (a) AGREED that the Central Executive be abolished and replaced by a Headquarters Region; 23 for/--/3 abst
 - (b) that the Headquarters Region shall be chosen at the Annual National Conference. Unanimous.
 - (c) that the Regional Committee of the Headquarters Region shall operate as the governing body of the Black Sash.
3. National President and National Vice-President:
Office Bearers
 - (a) There shall be a National President; one or two Vice Presidents and a National Treasurer. 22 for/4 again

- (b) that nominees for the National President and Vice-Presidents shall be selected from amongst members of the Headquarters Region. The National President and one National Vice President shall be nominated and elected by the Annual National Conference. Unanimous.

(The head of the Black Sash to be called President 16/7/-)

4. Function of the Headquarter Region

1. Proposed that among the functions of the Headquarter Region would be:-
- (a) to give leadership;
 - (b) to draw up statements;
 - (c) to co-ordinate projects and demonstrations;
 - (d) to arrange arbitration between Regions;
 - (e) to call special and National Conferences.

Proposed that this be amended and AGREED that in the constitution "Headquarters Region" be substituted for "Central Executive" through-out. Unanimous.

2. AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that National Office Bearers visit Regions to stimulate interest; to keep in touch with the varying points of view in other Regions; and to arbitrate whenever a contentious issue arises.

AGREED that this should not be written into the Constitution but should be a recommendation to the governing body.

5. Administration:

- (a) AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that Regions would continue to correspond directly with each other as before.

- (b) that in the Headquarters Region an extra Secretary shall be appointed to deal with National matters. --/1 against.

6. Regional Levy:

AGREED that the Levy for the ensuing year be 6/- per member
21 for/3 against/1 abst.

7. Annual Subscription:

The annual subscription shall be 2/6.

8. National Conference Representation:

- | | <u>Paid up Members</u> | <u>Delegates:</u> |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| (a) to be added to 2.(iv) | 0 to 100 | 1 |
| | 101 to 200 | 2 |

- (b) The headquarters region shall be entitled to representation according to the above scale in addition to the President, one Vice President, the National Treasurer and two additional delegates (i.e. normal delegation plus 5 of whom three shall be the three office bearers) --/5 against/2 abst

9 and 10. Withdrawn.

11. Dissolution:

Clause 12.(ii) to read:-
to read

That in the event of the necessity for an emergency dissolution of the Black Sash, the Headquarters Region, after consultation, if practicable, with the Regions, shall be empowered to act as they see fit.

AGREED that the sub-Committee nominated re-word the constitution as amended and that the draft be sent to the Regions for ratification.
25/....

20. A. Election of Headquarters Region.

Cape Western Proposed Natal Midlands seconded Cape E.

S. Transvaal Proposed Cape W. seconded Mrs Willis.

The Chairman ruled that each delegate would exercise an individual vote in the best interests of the Black Sash.

B. Cape Western duly-elected Headquarters Region.

B. Election of National President and one Vice President:-

Mrs E. Stott Proposed, seconded and duly elected.

Mrs Petersen congratulated Cape W. on being re-elected the Headquarters Region and congratulated Mrs E. Stott on being elected National President;

Mrs Sinclair seconded this vote thanks expressing her delight that Cape W. had been elected. She congratulated Mrs Stott and said that if anyone deserved to be the National President Mrs Stott merited that high office and Mrs Stott could at all times be assured of the loyalty and support of the S. Transvaal Region. She thanked the retiring President, Mrs Petersen, for the way in which she had led the Black Sash through a very difficult period and congratulated her.

Mrs Stott said that she would do her best for the Black Sash. She thanked the past President, Mrs Petersen, and said that in the last year she had borne the full burden of the Central Executive and had been not only the National President but also the National Secretary. Mrs Petersen's strength had never deviated from the things she believed in and she had been an inspiration to all the Black Sash.

National Vice-Chair:

Mrs M. Petersen proposed seconded and duly elected.

Mrs N. Robb was proposed but did not accept nomination.

The National President paid a glowing tribute to the Secretary, Mrs Walton and passed a very sincere vote of thanks to her. PASSED WITH ACCLAMATION.

21. AGREED that the next Annual National Conference be held in the first week in November, all things being equal. Items for the Agenda to be sent in by mid-September.

Mrs D. Curry, Border, extended a warm invitation to Conference. She was honoured to invite the National office bearers and delegates to East London.

Item 15. Late Resolutions:

Mrs Powell, Natal Coastal, said that her region desired to place on record at this Annual National Conference, its emphatic rejection of any form of Republican Government in this country.

IT WAS ACCEPTED that the Conference could not support the resolution. 2 for/20 against/1 abst

After a great deal of discussion and debate IT WAS AGREED that if the Bill only makes a change in the title of the head of the State, the Black Sash would not protest against it. 14 for/8 against.

Mrs Sinclair and Mrs Davidoff registered their protest that the Black Sash would not show their disapproval of the Constitution; they felt that this resolution was tantamount to accepting the Constitution.

IT WAS AGREED that a statement be issued now and at the time of the Bill the Black Sash would re-iterate this statement through-out the country, unless there were other changes in the Bill,

Whether South Africa is a monarchy or a republic, our present constitution does not safeguard the rights of all and we shall therefore continue to work for a constitution that will safeguard the basic rights and liberties of all South Africans and make inviolate the rule of law.

Item 14. Late items for General Discussion:

Mrs Curry Border, said that the Border Regional Conference had passed unanimously the resolution that the membership of the Black Sash be open to all South African women. Mrs Curry said that the contact she had made during the Emergency had made her realise that only through friendship could achievement come. For five years the Black Sash had been protesting against apartheid and yet had limited their membership. Discussion groups in their way were admirable but were not the same as members all working together.

Mrs Snitcher said full membership should be opened to women of all races for many reasons - it was unreasonable to have the aims and objects we did and yet withhold membership.

through-out the Conference Region after Region had said that the most important thing in recent times had been the contacts they had made during the emergency. The activities participated in were to them the most significant - this came out a great deal in all the Regional reports. Members recognised that there should be contact between the Black Sash and women of other races. It seem illogical to make these efforts and yet put up a tacit sign 'white women voters only'.

In the broader field - the work against Pass Laws- extremely important and valuable work but at the same time the wrong attitude not to let them work with us.

Membership was dropping and it was sad that it had dropped to such an extent. She had heard of five and a half years of repeated attempts to woo the women of other persuasions; the Nationalists were indifferent, the socialists busy, and membership decreased.

It is true that the Black Sash is doing useful and necessary work but with few women voters; They have either joined their political parties or for various reasons abstained from joining, it is therefore fruitless to urge the white women to join. There were numbers of women who subscribed to our ideals, if the Black Sash opened its membership to such women it could become a most effective force.

From the other side - what did our non-white friends think? As long as the barrier exists the non-white can never completely accept trust the Black Sash, and this is a serious statement. She appreciated that there were different ideas in the Black Sash on the extent of participation, but whether remote or extensive it was not genuine unless on a basis of fairly equal partnership, working with and not for. To work for is patronising and offensive. If the Black Sash is to continue its extremely valuable work or increase that valuable work it must open its membership to the non-whites.

Mrs Sinclair said that she agreed in principle but any organisation was entitled to decide on their membership not with the purpose of excluding. The practical difficulties were very apparent, especially in Johannesburg where there were great distances to travel and where the white women could

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not go into the townships to hold meetings and transport of non-whites from the townships was almost impossible. The only possible day on which to have a meeting was a Saturday afternoon and this was not a good day from the white members point of view. If the Black Sash were going to have mixed meetings regularly, where? when? and how? was this to be done. If meetings were held at night it meant going out to the townships to fetch and to take back non-whites - a matter of about 100 miles. There were all these practical difficulties in carrying out this resolution, quite apart from the fact of getting women to join and getting the right type to join. While being entirely in sympathy she felt it was necessary to examine our aims and objects and how to achieve these. It was not true that we only worked for them, but that we had tried to work with them, and we had worked at educating our members to this aspect of working with the non-whites. The S. Transvaal's experience of the experiment in consultation was valuable, a great unanimity of thought on the ordinary simple things that affect women had emerged from these meetings. She urged that it would be better for what we are trying to achieve if, for the time being, this experiment could be expanded to joint meetings & projects together.

Other points raised:-

- i. It had been proved that we had no influence with the electorate therefore the old argument that including voters only would give us more influence was invalid. To open our membership would give new spirit and new feeling;
- ii. What had impressed Chief Luthuli most was the fact that white women were protesting and taking chances on things which did not affect them. The average non-white was fighting mainly for themselves but it was felt that people were impressed that we had nothing to gain for ourselves;
- iii. through-out the Conference everyone had said that freedom was indivisible;
- iv. the Black Sash was still an organisation not identified with, absorbed in or belonging to the non-whites; it was not agreed that we could not work or co-operate on an equal basis for we did. The character of the movement would change if we had men members, so the whole character would change if we had non-whites. For some reason or other we would find that we would have separate branches;
- v. Even if we did open our ranks we would have an insignificant number joining, for the accusations levelled against us are not because the Black Sash is not open to non-whites but because we are privileged groups. There are plenty of organisations open to non-whites but generally they don't join and it does not alter the criticism;
- vi. it was doubted if many of our members were prepared to identify themselves in the non-white struggle; and many non-whites would be slow to join an organisation which was not militant or co-ersive or forceful in its approach;
- vii. we carried more weight as a white group protesting for non-whites;
- viii. there was an inevitable drift of non-whites into groups which afforded some kind of violent demonstration, if the non-whites joined our organisation it might help to bring about the realisation that violence would not basically solve their problems; if by opening our ranks to non-whites meant getting them to work with us, this speaker would say "open our ranks", but she was not convinced it would have this effect;

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- ix. the Eastern Cape had some unfortunate experiences with African women. Unfortunately they had militant leaders and, whilst co-operating well with them the Black Sash would not be able to stop violence thus the E. Cape would be very diffident about having non-white members.

Mrs Curry made a plea to all Regions to go back and create a climate of opinion. The Border Regional Council were unanimous in their decision to bring this up over and over again.

Item 14. No. 8.

Participation by non-Whites in Municipal and Local Government.

Mrs Powell, Natal Coastal reported on the action taken by the Durban Women's Committee who were working with the Institute.

It was proposed Mrs Stott and seconded Mrs Spottiswoode that the Black Sash should make representations to local authorities for them to include non-white representatives on their own bodies; amended to - make representations that local authorities should allow non-whites themselves participation in local authority. When Mrs Fisher pointed out that the Transvaal was precluded from such action, and that any talk of provincial autonomy was dangerous for the Transvaal; and further that negotiations made the position in Natal very delicate, it was agreed that Natal be given every assistance but that no hard and fast resolution be made.

9. Boycotts - with special reference to the repercussions which adversely affect non-Europeans in Industry.

A statement made in the press on Sept. 20th about the unemployment problem among Africans resulting from the boycott had prompted Dr. Millie Campbell to ask that Conference write to Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt pointing out that the boycott was causing hardship and endless complications to those it was intended to help. Only the politically-conscious Africans were in favour of the boycott.

It was recommended that Regions consider this recommendation and send further information to the new governing body, who after considering facts and figures would make some decision about a personal letter to Dr. Millie Campbell and any further action they deemed advisable.

THANKS.

On behalf of the retiring Central Executive the National President, Mrs Petersen, thanked Cape Western for the very wonderful way in which they had organised the Conference, we owed them a very hearty vote of thanks.

Thanks were expressed to all the back-room girls who had done so much; especially to Miss Windham and her transport organisation; Mrs Hodgson and Mrs Morris and the universal aunts; and Mrs Coplands for the excellent supper and coffee before and after the film evening.

She also expressed her thanks to Mrs Dietrich for acting as Minute secretary and to all the delegates for their co-operation.

Mrs Sinclair moved a sincere vote of thanks to the Central Executive for their work on behalf of the Black Sash and to Mrs Petersen and the other Chairman for taking the Chair at this Conference. She also expressed, on behalf of all the delegates, deep thanks to all who had done so much for the delegates and congratulated Cape W. on their arrangements.

The President declared the Conference closed.