

THE BLACK SASH

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD ON OCTOBER
20TH, 21ST 22ND and 23RD 1964 HELD IN THE SUPPER ROOM
OF THE CITY HALL AT PIETERMARITZBURG.

DELEGATES ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE :

HEADQUARTERS :

President	-	Mrs. Sinclair
Vice President	-	Mrs. Davidoff
National Secretary	-	Mrs. Johnston
National Treasurer	-	Mrs. Dyzenhaus

CAPE WESTERN REGION :

Mrs. Robb, Mrs. Willis, Mrs. Parks, Mrs. Henderson, Mrs. Stott,
Mrs. Ritchken, Mrs. Schurr, Mrs. Eriksson, Mrs. Green.

CAPE EASTERN REGION. :

Mrs. A. Bolton, Mrs. D. Davis

BORDER REGION :

Mrs. D. Currie.

NATAL COASTAL REGION :

Mrs. Francis, Mrs. Ventress, Mrs. Grice.

NATAL MIDLANDS REGION :

Mrs. Corrigall, Miss Friday, Mrs. Hey, Mrs. Hill

Alternates :

Mrs. Dyer, Dr. Woods.

TRANSVAAL REGION :

Mrs. Hill, Mrs. Driver, Mrs. Marais, Mrs. Cluver,
Mrs. Carlson, Mrs. Harris.

20TH OCTOBER, 1964 - 8.00 p.m.

The 1964 Annual National Conference of the Black Sash opened with a Public Meeting in the Supper Room of the Pietermaritzburg City Hall. Mrs. M. Corrigall was in the Chair and the meeting was addressed by Mr. Gerald Walker. Thereafter Mrs. Jean Sinclair, National President of the Black Sash spoke on "South Africa in Crisis".

21ST OCTOBER, 1964 .

The Dedication was read.

Mrs. Corrigall welcomed delegates to Pietermaritzburg, and announced a cocktail party on Thursday evening 22nd October, 1964.

Mrs. Sinclair thanked Mrs. Corrigall and Natal Midlands Region for all their kindness.

Two telegrams were read, one from Mrs. Roberts and one from Mrs. Petersen.

Tribute was paid to Mrs. Shearer and Mrs. Argo of Natal Coastal and Mrs. Fleming of Transvaal.

Apologies - Mrs. Kentridge, Transvaal.

Mrs. Cluver was given permission by the Conference to assist the Transvaal delegation instead of joining Headquarters Executive.

1. The Rules of procedure were adopted.
2. The Press committee consisted of the following members :-
Mrs. Davidoff (Convener), Mrs. Stott, Mrs. Dyer, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Currie, Mrs. Francis and Mrs. Davis.

3. The Minutes of the Conference of 1963 were confirmed, subject to the following corrections :-

Page 2 (Pass Law Film) to read - There would be many difficulties.

Page 2 (9) to read :-

Page 3. Bantu Education Act. This matter was discussed.

Holding of multi-racial conference and house meetings

The difficulties of holding a multi-racial meeting in South

Page 7 Advice Offices.

the first para. of the narrative to read :-

"Payments out are entered into a book and consist of occasional
"bus fares and occasionally money to replace a lost reference
"book in cases of extreme poverty."

4. REGIONAL REPORTS.

Natal Midlands : Mrs. Corrigall had nothing to add to the circulated report.

Cape Eastern. : Mrs. Davis reported that an advocate in Port Elizabeth has taken up the matter of permission being required from the City Council for demonstrations, and the fact that the Council must consider applications.

Discussion ensued on this question - points arising :-

Regions must get permission from their local City Council
bye-laws must be considered in each area preferably
by legal advisers - the tie-up between demonstrating
without permission and both the Criminal Laws Amendment
Act and the "Sabotage" Act must be kept in mind.

Border : Mrs. Currie read the Report.

Cape Western : Mrs. Henderson's comments :- Sea Point Branch will shortly be resuscitated - Regional Council meets every week - Branches have monthly meetings, usually with speakers. Bantu Laws Amendment Bill demonstration held with very successful pictorial posters, and another demonstration with posters added each day. A citizens' protest meeting on Bantu Laws Bill was held.

Cape Western - Cont/

Very good meeting held on October 15th re group areas addressed by Imam of Mosque in Claremont - difficult to find non-white speakers - evidence will be given on Group Areas before Department of Planning. 90 Day Protest main work at beginning of year - overflowing meeting held - Black Sash organised buses to bring Africans to meeting from locations. Migratory labour may be subject for Summer School - possibility that special issue of magazine will be put on reading list for African Studies Department of the University of Cape Town who will also use Advice Offices Cases for research. A quarterly letter is sent to all members. A further letter published in press re statement by Mr. de Wet Nel in Paarl.

Discussion ensued on multi-racial meetings in Regions - bare details of Regional practices are given below.

Mrs. Stott - Cape Western - Supper parties

Mrs. Corrigall - Natal Midlands - Afternoon tea parties.

Mrs. Carlson - Transvaal - Discussion groups, lunch provided.

Mrs. Ventress - Natal Coastal - An Oriental dinner was held for which tickets were sold; an exhibition of Oriental Art was held for which all exhibits were lent.

Natal Coastal: The Report was read by Mrs. Francis who reported two new members since the report was drawn up.

Transvaal : Mrs. Cluver reported on weekly demonstrations against 90-day detention which were supported by public. Biggest effort during year was Forum on Migratory Labour which Mrs. Davidoff had organised. The 90-day protest had entailed a great deal of work for Mrs. Hill.

5. Headquarters Report :

Mrs. Sinclair reported great interest in Black Sash activities both here and overseas.

Agreed; that conference congratulate Mr. Martin Luther King on the receipt of the Nobel Prize.

National Treasurer's Report :

Mrs. Dyzenhaus asked for reserve fund for emergency expenses and an amount of R300.00 was agreed to by Conference. Agreed that this be collected from Regions by voluntary donations.

Amendment to Report - that paragraph 5 be amended to read 31st March 1964 Agreed.

Recommended by Mrs. Willis that changes in membership figures at the end of September be reported to Conference in addition to March figures.

Natal Coastal Region offered a sum of R50.00 for the Reserve Fund and Cape Western and Natal Midlands amounts to be determined.

Report Adopted - proposed Mrs. Willis, seconded Mrs. Driver.

Magazine Report -

Mrs. Grant was congratulated by Cape Western, Transvaal and Cape Eastern delegations.

Agreed that the magazine (special issue) be sent to all members of opposition.

Regions agreed to buy up surplus copies overprinted and a member of Cape Western stood ~~guarantee~~ for all not sold.

Agreed that the type set up for the special issue be bought.

Adoption of Report /

proposed Mrs. Dyzenhaus, seconded Mrs. Corrigall.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF CONFERENCE, 1963.

Status of Magazine Editor. A decision taken at 1963 Conference that the Magazine Editor have full voting rights at National Conference as a member of the National Executive was confirmed.

"The Banished". Cape Eastern Region attempted to have one man removed from Banishment.
Recommended : that the Transvaal Region get names of all "Banished" and that Cape Western attempt to have these names tabled by individual M.P's.

Membership Drive. Cape Western had six meetings and gained a few members. Mrs. Sinclair proposed that the idea of a membership drive be abandoned - Agreed.

Goodwill Message. Not carried out because of objections. Cape Western to attempt this year in their own region, but will not publish unless at least 500 signatures collected.
Regions have autonomy in matters of this nature.

Migratory Labour and Pamphlet on Fallacious Statements - both these items held over for the moment - see Items for Discussion.

7. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS.

Draft Constitution accepted.

Amendment No. 1 on the Agenda postponed till 22.10.64.

(2) Clause 15 (iii) be amended to read :-

"On dissolution the disposal of the assets and funds of the
"organisation shall be determined by the National Conference
"or Headquarters Regional Council/Committee".

Proposed Mrs. Johnston, seconded Mrs. Dyzenhaus
Transvaal Region.

carried unanimously.

(3) Clause 16 (ii) - After National Conference. add:-

"The Headquarters Regional Council/Committee may alternatively
"hold a referendum of the total membership to decide on an
"amendment to any of these clauses".

Proposed Mrs. Corrigall, seconded Mrs. Dyer.
Natal Midlands Region.

Not carried

(4) Clause 16 (ii)/---
Page Five/-

- (4) Clause 16 (ii) - After National Conference. add:-
"Proxy votes shall be accepted for the purposes of this sub-
"clause subject to the following provisions :-
(a) that no delegate shall exercise more than one proxy vote;
(b) that no delegation shall exercise more than three proxy
votes;
(c) that a delegate may exercise a proxy vote only on behalf
of a delegate from her own delegation; and
(d) that a delegation wishing to make use of this sub-clause
shall request permission from the Chairman at the start of
the Conference to do so".

Proposed Mrs. Cluver, Seconded Mrs. Hill.
Transvaal Region.

Not Carried. For 13 Against 14 Abstentions 2

8. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION.

Mrs. Davidoff in the Chair.

1.. ADVICE OFFICES.

Mrs. Eriksson gave a verbal report from Elgin Advice Office, which opened at the beginning of this year and has had 35 cases. They are open only one day per week but work on cases most of the week. Have had enquiries from Africans, Coloureds and Europeans.

Cape Western - Athlone Advice Office Report presented by Mrs. Parks.

Pull-offs are available of article in "Cape Times".

Transkei - the labour force is 250,000 and there is employment in the area for only 24,00.

Transvaal - Johannesburg Advice Office Report presented by Mrs. Sinclair.

Office has little co-operation from Resettlement Board - particularly Alexandra Township. Young boys whose parents are legally in area are worst problem. Find that officials "pass the buck". Cases have difficulty in getting birth certificates. No African from country can seek work in Urban Area until he is 20 years old, although he has to pay tax at 18 years.

AGREED - That the press committee use the number of interviews held in all Advice Offices in Press publicity.

Voting - Against 4 Abstention 1 In favour 22

22ND OCTOBER, 1964.

8. 1. ADVICE OFFICES (CONTD)

Mrs. Sinclair in the Chair.

Natal Coastal - Durban Advice Office - Report presented by Mrs. Francis.

Cape Eastern - Port Elizabeth Advice Office Report was presented by Mrs. Bolton.

Border - East London Advice Office - Mrs. Currie gave report and said that office is most unpopular with officials - Men who leave or lose employment are fined R6.00 if Reference Book not put in order within 72 hours.

Cape Western/---

Page Six/-

Cape Western then reported that they have drawn up and will distribute to all "bachelors" in Langa a pamphlet in Xhosa re the position of wives who come to visit their husbands from the country.

Recommendation

"That in order that all members of the Black Sash should be better equipped to make the South African public aware of the devastating consequences of the Influx Control and Migratory Labour systems, every member of the Black Sash should undertake to spend a morning in the Advice Offices and to bring at least one of her friends with her ; this to be achieved by roster method in the Branches".

Proposed Mrs. Robb Seconded Mrs. Henderson
Voting For 28, Abstentions 2 . Carried.

Recommendation.

"That whenever Press or similar publicity is obtained for Advice Office cases an attempt should always be made to have appended at the end:-

THIS IS NO "HARD LUCK" EXCEPTION TO THE RULE. This case is typical of hundreds in Advice Office files and of the South African situation. It is merely one more illustration of the fact that, for millions of our compatriots, there is nowhere where they may live or work as of RIGHT in the land of their birth. Cape Western.

Proposed Mrs. Robb Seconded Mrs. Cluver.
Carried.

7. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS.

That Clause 3 (iv) be deleted.

Proposed Mrs. Hill Seconded Mrs. Cluver.
Voting For 2 Against 27 Abstention 1
Not Carried.

8. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION.

2. DEMONSTRATIONS.

Points arising from discussion.

Transvaal Region will hold a demonstration for one hour per day for 90-days, only one woman to stand at a time. Mrs. Stott suggested mobile demonstrations, Miss Friday said that this had been tried in Natal Midlands and had not been a success. Mrs. Corrigall asked about publicity in press and both Transvaal and Cape Western said it was quite good. Transvaal reported cartoons in Afrikaans press. Border reported only two persons now stand.

3. FUNCTION OF BLACK SASH.

4. FEAR.

5. A NATIONAL MULTI-RACIAL MEETING.

It was agreed that these three matters should be discussed together and the discussion was opened by Mrs. Corrigall, who wondered whether or not too much was being made of Advice Office work and whether we are not losing sight of our function as a pressure group. Lively discussion ensued with suggestions coming, in particular, from Mrs. Carlson, Mrs. Dyzenhaus, and from a memo sent to Conference by Mrs. Wendy Jackson of Border. Mrs. Cluver reported an approach to the Black Sash to help with a Conference on liberalism. It was finally agreed that all the ideas for positive action as a pressure group be incorporated in one resolution:-

Resolution.

"That in order to further the aims of the Black Sash, a planning sub-committee attached to Headquarters and a planning sub-committee in each Region be responsible for :-

- (a) the consideration of a conference on the value of liberalism;
- (b) a practical scheme to re-orientate thinking and behaviour to form social attitudes suitable for a multi-racial society;
- (c) a plan to make our propaganda positive and constructive to create greater public understanding of our aims;
- (d) a programme of political education, particularly of the young;
- (e) a study of the techniques of propaganda used by the Government with a view to countering them".

Proposed Mrs. Dyzenhaus Seconded Mrs. Davidoff

Voting CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Resolution.

"That the Black Sash, being convinced that until moderates are as militant in their moderation as extremists on both sides are in their extremism, there will be no hope of resolving the present crisis in South Africa, determines to work even more dynamically to make Black Sash aims much more widely known and to intensify the campaign for their realisation in the effort to secure a peaceful solution to South Africa's problems on a basis of the recognition and protection by law of the rights and liberties of all the people and peoples of our land".

Proposed Mrs. Robb Seconded Mrs. Henderson.

Voting CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Resolution.

"That the Black Sash devises methods of counteracting

- (a) The Government's smear campaign against liberal attitudes; and
- (b) the insinuation that all legitimate opposition to Government policy is subversive and inspired by "Communists, Liberalists and Leftists".

Proposed Mrs. Dyzenhaus Seconded Mrs. Harris.

Voting CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. MIGRATORY LABOUR.

Mrs. Henderson presented a memo from Mrs. Birt of Cape Western on the work done by a group of young church people over the last year. With help, guidance and facts supplied by the Black Sash, pamphlets have been issued, recordings made and played at many Church functions, talks have been given and facts from all these have been reprinted in many Church Magazines. Archbishop McCann has made this the subject of a sermon, and a prayer card has been printed and is now being distributed to many denominations. The Christian Council will make this the subject of one part of Compassion Week next March. Many other activities have been undertaken by this committee who have expressed their gratitude to the Black Sash.

Recommendation.

"That the Black Sash try to make a competent film on the life of a migrant labourer".

Proposed Mrs. Stott Seconded Mrs. Dyer.

Voting For 22 Against 5

Exhibition on work of Black Sash.

Cape Western intend to hold an exhibition on 25th, 26th and 27th May to celebrate the tenth birthday of the Black Sash. Regions asked if this could be a mobile exhibition so that it could be sent round the country.

Resolution.

"That maximum effort must be made to inform South Africans of the facts and effects of migrant labour as probably the major social evil of our times and our worst sin against the principles of Western civilization; it must be shown that the system holds no question of true separate development, as the Government still plans to base the economy of the Republic on African labour- but aims to turn all workers into migrants, herding men, many of them married, into single quarters, for long periods. This policy, in the past, has been one of the contributing factors to troubles such as the Langa and Paarl riots.

Proposed Mrs. Henderson Seconded Mrs. Robb.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. S.A.B.C. AND PRESS.

Mrs. Davidoff opened the discussion with several ideas, i.e.- advertising, a possible further petition and the pressurising of other groups to help. Mrs. Hill suggested that members should write individually to their Member of Parliament.

23RD OCTOBER, 1964.

8. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION.

7 S.A.B.C. AND PRESS .

Points arising from discussion :-

Every member of every region should send individual letters to Members of Parliament.

Tape recordings to be made of controversial broadcasts.

Get copies of school broadcasts from S.A.B.C.

Ask newspapers to publish articles.

Use all information by giving to opposition M.P's to help in their debates in Parliament (suggested Sir de Villiers Graaff, Mr. Etienne Malan, Mrs. Helen Suzman, Mr. M. Mitchell and Mr. P. Plewman).

Also hand information to E.V.C. and Home and School Council.

Possible "Fact and Fiction" column in Magazine.

Possible special issue of magazine on this subject.

AGREED that a planning committee should be responsible.

In connection with control of the Press it was suggested that Regions seek interviews with sympathetic editors to express the congratulations of conference.

Agreed that Regions have autonomy on this and each to decide whether or not they will do this.

Agreed that a letter be sent from Conference to certain stated newspapers.

8. MEMBERSHIP FORM.

Resolution.

The Membership form to be amended as follows :-

After "Name" add "Dr. Mrs/Miss.

Before "Address" add "Residential"

Delete "Constituence in which registered as voter",

After extract from Constitution add:-

"I understand that in pursuance of these aims and objects the Black Sash is opposed to enforced apartheid, the Pass Laws, discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or creed and all forms of totalitarianism.

I hereby undertake to subscribe wholeheartedly to Black Sash Policy"

Proposed Mrs. Henderson Seconded Mrs. Robb.

CAPE WESTERN.

Voting For 16 Against 10 Abstentions 3

9. DRAFT LEGISLATION.

Points from discussion :-

Cape Western feels it most important that Regions should keep their own members informed both at meetings and by other means

Natal Midlands - use Race Relations summaries of Bills.

Cape Eastern - go round branches doing this.

Natal Coastal - study bills and get a lawyer to explain.

Transvaal - Get all bills and precis from Institute of Race Relations - inform members through meetings and also send newsletter.

Agreed that Regions should have an expert to study legislation and the White Papers

10. OPENING OF MEMBERSHIP TO MEN.

Cape Western withdrew this item for discussion.

9.

RESOLUTIONS.

"That the Black Sash once more declares its utter abhorrence of the 90-days clause (Clause 17 of the General Laws Amendment Act 1963) for the following reasons:-

(a)/---

Page Ten/

9.

RESOLUTIONS (CONT)/

- (a) it destroys freedom from arbitrary arrest ;
- (b) it denies to citizens the right under the criminal code to be brought before a public court, on a specific charge, within 48 hours of arrest, there to be remanded for trial or discharge ;
- (c) The mental and physical torture inflicted by prolonged isolation and questioning is incompatible with civilized standards of justice.
Moreover, the "information" obtained by this means has been declared by medical and psychiatric experts to be unreliable as evidence and has been rejected by a Cape Town magistrate as inadmissible:
- (d) the secrecy that accompanies the implementation of this clause and the encouragement it gives to the making of anonymous perjured statements against innocent people have added immeasurably to the creation of an atmosphere of insecurity and fear in our country; and finally,
- (e) the operation of the clause and the public indignation which it arouses distract attention from the root causes of the unrest (such as group areas and Pass Laws) which it is intended to suppress, and disguises the fact that the only remedy for that unrest is just legislation.

The Black Sash therefore resolves to use every lawful opportunity and means to urge in the strongest terms that this clause be repealed once and for all".

Proposed Mrs. Henderson Seconded Mrs. Robb.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

"That the Black Sash maintain its protest against 90-day detention and that in all Regions where no ad hoc committee exists such Committees, composed of interested persons, be established to exert constant pressure on the Government to repeal Clause 17 of the General Laws Amendment Act of 1963, and to return to the Rule of Law".

Proposed Mrs. Hill Seconded Mrs. Cluver.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

"That the Black Sash condemns legislation which permits :-

- (a) arbitrary bannings, listings and namings under the Suppression of Communism Act against which there is no appeal to the Courts; and
- (b) police searches of innocent people, causing indignity and suspicion against which there is no redress.

Proposed Mrs. Cluver Seconded Mrs. Davidoff

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

"That a vigorous campaign be instigated against proposed legislation to ban from the teaching and legal professions persons alleged by the Government to have certain political leanings".

Proposed Mrs. Davidoff Seconded Mrs. Marais.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.

RESOLUTIONS (CONT)/

"That the Black Sash condemns all violence, including illegal abduction".

This resolution was withdrawn by Transvaal Region as this matter is already covered by the Constitution.

RECOMMENDATION.

"That all members, as individuals, be urged to take a closer interest in the work of the Defence and Aid Fund in their area, and sympathetically consider requests for help from that organisation".

Proposed Mrs. Henderson Seconded Mrs. Robb.

Voting For, 24 Abstentions 4 CARRIED

"That each Region be responsible for contacting South Africa Foundation and other influential visitors with a view to ensuring that they are informed of the full facts of conditions in the country".

Proposed Mrs. Henderson Seconded Mrs. Stott.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Agreed in connection with the above resolution, that Regions keep each other informed of contacts made.

"That a committee be established in one region to go into ways and means of ensuring that non-whites, entitled to workmen's compensation are timeously made aware of their rights to compensation and receive such compensation without undue difficulty"

Proposed Mrs. Cluver Seconded Mrs. Carlson.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Agreed in connection with the above resolution, that the co-ordinating committee be set up in Cape Western Region and that information gathered by Regions be sent to Cape Western.

MRS CORRIGALL TOOK THE CHAIR HERE.

10.

ELECTION OF HEADQUARTERS REGION.

Transvaal Region was nominated by Mrs. Henderson, seconded by Mrs. Robb Carried unanimously with Headquarters Executive abstaining.

Resolution.

"That this Conference approves the National Office bearers holding office for a further year as required by Clause 8 (i) (c) of the Constitution".

Proposed Mrs. Stott Seconded Mrs. Robb

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

with Headquarters Executive abstaining.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT/-

Page Twelve/-

NATIONAL PRESIDENT.

Mrs. Sinclair was proposed by Mrs. Henderson
seconded by Mrs. Currie

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.

NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS :

Mrs. Davidoff was proposed by Mrs. Robb
seconded by Mrs. Stott.

Mrs. Cluver was proposed by Mrs. Francis
seconded by Mrs. Ventress.

Mrs. Hill was proposed by Mrs. Driver
seconded by Mrs. Carlson.

Mrs. Davidoff was not prepared to accept nomination and Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Cluver were therefore declared Vice-Presidents for the coming year.

Mrs. Henderson thanked Transvaal Region for the work of Headquarters over the years and pledged warmest support.

Mrs. Sinclair thanked her executive committee and Vice-Presidents for their assistance, namely Mesdames Cluver, Davidoff, Johnston, Grant and Dyzenhaus, and Mrs. Hill, the Regional Chairman. She also thanked all the other Regions for their co-operation.

MRS. SINCLAIR AGAIN TOOK THE CHAIR.

DATE AND VENUE OF CONFERENCE 1965.

Although both Cape Western Region and Cape Eastern Region were anxious to have Conference in their area, Cape Western agreed to stand down as it was felt that the smaller Regions need this more.

It was therefore agreed that Conference will be held in Port Elizabeth during the week 17th to 23rd October, 1965 - the exact dates to be advised later.

Mrs. Sinclair thanked Mrs. Corrigan, her committee and all members of Natal Midlands Region for the wonderful organisation, comfort, food, etc., provided to delegates during Conference.