

THE BLACK SASH

MINUTES OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD AT DURBAN FROM  
15TH OCTOBER 1973 TO 18TH OCTOBER 1974. 3.

DELEGATES.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT	:	Mrs. Jean Sinclair
NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT	:	Mrs. R. M. Johnston
NATIONAL TREASURERS	:	Mrs. Dora Hill Mrs. B. Beinashowitz
NATIONAL SECRETARY	.	Mrs. June Wilson
MAGAZINE EDITOR	:	Mrs. S. Duncan
ALBANY REGION	:	Mesdames : M. Wilsworth, S. McLennan D. Wyndham-Kelly
BORDER REGION	:	Mesdames : D. Streek, D. Curry, V. Sullivan
NATAL COASTAL REGION	:	Mesdames : K. Gaynor, M. Ambler, S. Piper, D. Patrick, M. Grice.
NATAL MIDLANDS REGION	:	Mesdames : J. Roberts, P. Wellington M. Corrigall
CAPE WESTERN REGION	:	Mesdames : N. Robb, M. Burton, P. Pearce, A. Stekhoven, J. Rickhards, S. Turner, H. Kotze, S. A. Raynham
CAPE EASTERN REGION	:	Mrs. A. Warren
TRANSVAAL REGION	:	Mesdames Kabak, Mendelsohn, Duncan, Zille, Anderson, Kirk

MONDAY 15TH OCTOBER, 1973.

The 19TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE was opened at a Public Meeting in The St. Thomas' Church Hall, Durban at 8 p.m.

MRS. JEAN SINCLAIR, National President of the Black Sash gave her Annual Address after which Mr. Duchesne Grice addressed the meeting and declared the Conference open.

TUESDAY 16TH OCTOBER, 1973.

9. a.m Registration of Delegates

9.30 a.m Symposium

SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF OUR SOCIETY : WAGES OR IGNORANCE?

Mrs. K. Gaynor, Chairman of Natal Coastal Region took the Chair.

Mrs. Doreen Patrick/

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Mrs. Doreen Patrick, who has been instrumental in the organisation and the work of carrying out the Malnutrition Survey, made the introductory speech, giving the background to and the Black Sash involvement in the Survey. The sample taken was the age group one to five years.

The next speaker was Miss. Elizabeth Clarke, B Soc Sc Hon, a social worker from the Charles Johnston Hospital Nqutu. She spoke on the effects of Malnutrition as they see them at Nqutu.

The next speaker was an African Social Worker from Nqutu. She explained the situation occurring among her own people as a result of malnutrition.

Mrs. Fatima Meer, Senior Lecturer in Social Science at the University of Natal, spoke of the effects of poverty and malnutrition on the Indian Community.

Mrs. Mgadi, a Social Educationalist for African Schools, told of the difficulties she encounters among the parents of children in trying to teach them to feed themselves and their children correctly and how to budget to make the best use of the money available for food.

In the afternoon Dr. Anthony Barker, the doctor in charge of the Charles Johnston Hospital gave a most moving account of his work at Nqutu. He spoke too on the Malnutrition Survey. He emphasised the large number of babies admitted to hospital as a result of being looked after by grandmothers, the break-up of family life, as a result of the migrant labour policy and the small sums of money being sent by the wage earners in the cities to keep their families in the homelands. These families depend entirely on these small amounts to feed large households.

After Dr. Barker's address, a panel of Speakers, Dr. Anthony Barker, Dr. Margaret Barker from Nqutu, Mr. Percy Thomas represented Industry and Mrs. Mgadi the Social Educationalist, answered many questions from the audience.

There was a general consensus that poverty was the major cause of malnutrition in the Homelands, but that ignorance aggravated the situation.

Mrs. Patrick and Natal Coastal were warmly congratulated on the organisation of a most interesting Symposium and on their initiative and hard work in carrying out the Malnutrition Survey.

A vote of thanks to all the speakers was proposed by Mrs. Jean Sinclair.

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WEDNESDAY 17TH OCTOBER 1973.

The Dedication was read by Mrs. Jean Sinclair.

A letter of good wishes for a successful conference from Mrs. Joyce Harris, and a telegram from Mrs. Diana Andrews were read.

APOLOGIES : Mesdames : Harris - Headquarters  
Waite and Dyzenhaus - Transvaal

Mrs. Anderson asked /---

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Mrs. Anderson asked Conference to permit Mrs. Duncan to be a Transvaal Delegate and this was agreed to.

Mrs. Robb thanked Mrs. Grice for the delightful party given for delegates and friends of the Black Sash.

Mrs. Gaynor, Chairman, Natal Coastal Region welcomed delegates on behalf of her region.

Mrs. Sinclair congratulated Natal Coastal Region on The Symposium -  
SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF OUR SOCIETY : WAGES OR IGNORANCE?

She paid tribute to the excellent work done on the Survey on Malnutrition by Mrs. Patrick and her helpers.

Mrs. Sinclair thanked Natal Coastal for the excellent arrangements for Conference and for the flowers sent to every delegate.

THE RULES OF PROCEDURE WERE ADOPTED.

The following Press Committee was elected :-

Mesdames : Piper, Streek, Robb, Anderson, Warren, Johnston, Willsworth and Roberts (Convenor - Mrs. Piper).

THE MINUTES OF CONFERENCE 1972 WERE CONFIRMED.

HEADQUARTERS REPORTS :

These had been circulated and discussion took place on the content.

It was agreed that Regions would try to mount photographic exhibitions in their own Regions - with the hope that a National Exhibition be held next year.

MAGAZINE REPORT.

A letter of thanks for her help in producing the magazine to be sent to Mrs. Pat Tucker.

Conference congratulated Mrs. Duncan on the excellence of the magazine.

The report was adopted

Proposed Mrs. Streek  
Seconded Mrs. Mendelsohn

FINANCIAL REPORT.

Mrs. Hill presented the report and thanked Regions for their response to the appeal for financial help earlier in the year. The financial position of Headquarters had improved.

The report was adopted

Proposed Mrs. Burton  
Seconded Mrs. Corrigall.

REGIONAL REPORTS.

These were discussed and Regions were congratulated on work done in their regions during the year.

Mrs. Streek of Border Region gave figures and population and employment in the East London area i.e.,

160,000 adults in Mdantsane  
46,000 do Duncan Village  
approximately 100,000 illegally in these areas (not to mention)  
+ - 200,000 unemployed in the Transkei - there are only  
30,000 people employed in the East London area.

Mrs. Sinclair thanked Natal Coastal Region for an excellent tea and lunch.

A telegram of congratulation on her 94th birthday was sent to Mrs. Powell, who has been a member of the Black Sash from the very early days.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF CONFERENCE 1972.

1. Resolution - "That in view of the immediate need for constructive thinking and action in the present grave situation in South Africa, members of the Black Sash through individual and group efforts, should study and make known to others the published reports of the six Commissions of Spro-cas".

Mrs. Johnston reported that four study groups had been set up in Johannesburg and are proving to be very useful. Mrs. Robb said that a group in Cape Town had been studying Dr. Francis Wilson's book on Migrant Labour in South Africa.

2. "Projects for the year should be set out and the following were suggested : Campaign on African Women, Migrant Labour with due emphasis on Wages, Conditions of employment, Crime, lack of education, poverty etc., involving other organisations if possible".

Regional Reports showed that all Regions had been very active and Fact Papers produced for Conference confirmed this.

RESOLUTION.

"That the Black Sash affiliate to the program for Social Change".

Proposed Mrs. Duncan  
Seconded Mrs. Streek.

Discussion took place on the word "affiliate" and a vote was taken.

The resolution was carried

25 FOR  
5 AGAINST  
1 ABSTENTION.

RESOLUTION. (becoming a RECOMMENDATION).

"That the Black Sash stands should have a more positive form, offering what they believe in as well as what they protest against".

FACT PAPERS.

Removals.

This paper was prepared by Mrs. Barbara Waite, Transvaal Region and introduced by Mrs. Duncan. Congratulations were sent to Mrs. Waite. This paper brought up to date the numbers of people removed during the last year.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION/--

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION.

Housing. Mrs. Barboure, Natal Coastal Region read a lead-in paper. The appalling lack of housing for all black people resulted in Conference calling upon the Prime Minister to halt all group areas removals immediately and to provide the housing urgently need for the homeless as well as people housed under squalid conditions.

RESOLUTION. "That the Black Sash reiterates its total opposition to any further encroachment on the freedom of the Press, and promises its whole hearted support to the newspapers who have so courageously stood for justice in South Africa and integrity in their profession".

This resolution, proposed by Transvaal Region, was carried unanimously and its contents sent to the press.

RECOMMENDATION. "That the Black Sash be prepared to take immediate action, should it be necessary, on the publication of the reports of the Van Wyk de Vries Commission".

It was suggested that Regions try to make plans for National action should this be necessary. Regions were asked to try to write articles for their local press on academic freedom.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION.

A new Black Sash pamphlet emphasising the need for visual impact and readable copy as a means of communicating the aims of the Black Sash and as an encouragement to prospective members.

Mrs. Pearce, Cape Western Region, introduced the discussion and showed Conference a proposed pamphlet depicting four women, one Indian, one Coloured, one African and one White, walking together. The wording read " South Africa's future belongs to you, and you etc., etc.,

This pamphlet will be distributed and followed up with the green pamphlet accepted at Conference last year. Cape Western Region agreed to send copies of the finished pamphlet to each Region and would take orders from Regions requiring them.

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THURSDAY 18TH OCTOBER 1973.

A telegram of good wishes was received from Mrs. Rose Franks, Transvaal Region.

FACT PAPER.

Fingo Village to Committee's Drift.

Mrs. Willsworth read this Fact Paper. In discussion afterwards, it was stated that Committee's Drift was being planned to accommodate 100,000 to 200,000 people and that unemployment in this resettlement village would be likely to become a serious problem. There is practically no industry in Grahamstown.

FACT PAPER.

The Coloured People in Johannesburg.

This paper was drawn up by a group of members of Transvaal Region and was presented by Mrs. Kabak who commented on the important points. She said that there are 90,000 Coloured people in Johannesburg, half of whom were in dire need of decent housing ; education and recreational facilities are totally inadequate. Regions were asked to investigate the facilities for Coloured people in their areas.

RESOLUTION.

"That the Black Sash investigate land tenure and ownership by Black people and the detrimental effect lack of home ownership has on this sector of the population".

Proposed Mrs. Duncan  
Seconded Mrs. Burton

It was agreed that further investigations be carried out with regard to the laws and regulations in the Bantustans as well as the effect in both rural and urban areas.

The Resolution was passed unanimously.

FACT PAPER.

A Mine Training Programme for Migrant Workers.

This paper was prepared and introduced by Mrs. Johnston, Transvaal Region. Mrs. Johnston suggested that this programme could be adapted for training workers in any industry.

FACT PAPER.

Federation.

The following resolution was passed unanimously :-

"That the Black Sash study the possibilities of Federation in South Africa and of promoting inter-racial discussions on the subject".

Proposed Mrs. Robb  
Seconded Mrs. Burton

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION.

Tax Structure for Black People.

An introductory paper, written by Mrs. Dyzenhaus, was introduced by Mrs. Anderson, Transvaal Region. The paper revealed that the poorest section of the community was more stringently taxed than any other group.

Mrs. Sinclair suggested that all Regions write an article for the papers on taxation of the African people.

FACT PAPER.

A Survey of Domestic Servants' Wages.

This paper was read by Mrs. Stekhoven of Cape Western Region. A survey of wages and conditions was carried out among the members of the Black Sash in Cape Town. A questionnaire was sent out to 445 members of whom 136 replied.

It was accepted/  
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It was accepted that this was a small sample from a concerned group and was not indicative that wages and conditions would be the same as if the survey had covered a cross section of the public. There was discussion on the figures presented because it was argued that the wages of domestic servants, living in and paid monthly, could not be calculated on an hourly or daily basis.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION.

Overseas Magazine Subscriptions.

After discussion on this item, introduced for Headquarters by Mrs. Johnston, it was agreed that no action would be taken.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE.

Mrs. Robb extended an invitation to hold the next National Conference in Cape Town during March 1975.

The invitation was accepted with pleasure by all delegates and it was agreed that Regions would be consulted about suitable dates.

It was agreed that a Chairman's Conference be held sometime in 1974, at a date to be decided upon. Mrs. Streek asked that this meeting be held in East London and this was gratefully accepted. It was agreed that members of Border Region could be observers at this meeting but that the Chairman reserved the right to hold a closed session if it became necessary.

ELECTION OF HEADQUARTERS REGION.

Border Region had proposed Natal Coastal Region who had accepted nomination.

Mrs. Gaynor, Chairman, Natal Coastal, asked permission to withdraw this acceptance. This was granted.

Transvaal Region was elected unanimously.

Mrs. Robb paid tribute to Transvaal for their work as Headquarters and thanked them for taking on the burden for another year.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS.

National President : Mrs. Jean Sinclair Proposed Mrs. Burton  
Seconded Mrs. Anderson

Elected unanimously with acclaim.

National Vice-Presidents : Mrs. Joyce Harris Proposed Mrs. Anderson  
Seconded Mrs. Duncan

: Mrs. R. Johnston Proposed Mrs. Duncan  
Seconded Mrs. Kotze

: Mrs. G. Dyzenhaus Proposed Mrs. Mendelsohn  
Seconded Mrs. Kirk

An election was held and Mrs. Harris and Mrs. Johnston were elected.

GENERAL/-

GENERAL.

Mrs. Streek suggested that we take note of the recent proclamation on freedom of assembly for sport, entertainment etc.,

Cape Western Region was asked please to assist Headquarters by sending relevant Bills immediately they were tabled.

Good wishes from Conference were sent to Mrs. Wendy Jackson, wishing her a speedy recovery.

Border Region asked that Black Sash Badges be sent to them.

Mrs. Sinclair thanked Natal Coastal Region for their months of hard work for Conference, for the excellent Symposium, flowers and catering.

She also thanked Mrs. Jean Chase for assistance with the secretarial work, Mr. and Mrs. Grice for the lovely party on Tuesday evening, and Mr. Grice for opening conference.

Mrs. Robb, Cape Western, seconded the vote of thanks and also thanked Mrs. Sinclair for another year of chairmanship and Mrs. Bobbie Johnston for her work as vice-chairman.

The Conference closed at 3.30 p.m

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