

MINUTES OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE BLACK SASH HELD IN PORT ELIZABETH
FROM 14TH TO 17TH MARCH 1985

DELEGATES

Headquarters : Sheena Duncan National President
Joyce Harris National Vice President
Ethel Walt National Vice President
Audrey Coleman National Treasurer
Glenda Webster Magazine Editor
Rosemary Meny-Gibert National Secretary

Transvaal : Laura Pollecutt
Glenda Glover
Judith Hawarden
Jeanette Davidoff
Annica Van Gylswyk
Susan Trathen
Barbara Creedy
Gill De Vlieg
Miriam Hepner
Merle Beetge
Beulah Rollnick

Observers : Sharon Jacobson
Marion Spies

Cape Western Mary Burton
Noel Robb
Di Bishop
Margaret Nash
Jenny De Tolly
Sue Joynt
Beverley Runciman

Observers Phoebe Cotterill
Muriel Crewe
Liz Thompson
Bunny Young
Fran Luyt
Di Andrews
Joan Grover

Natal Midlands : Pessa Weinberg
Fidela Fouche

Natal Coastal : Ann Colvin
Solveig Piper
Jillian Nicholson
Georgina Stevens

Alternates : Rita Easton
Patty Geerds

DELEGATES CONT/---

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DELEGATES CONT/---

Albany

Margaret Barker
Gusta MacDonal d
Ruth Penny

Alternates

Terral Bowen
Rosemary Van Wyk Smith

Cape Eastern

Tessa Branch
Judy Chalmers
Gale Hood

Alternates

Molly Blackburn
Zoe Riorden
Bobby Melunsky
Isabel Douglas

Border

Trudy Thomas

The opening of Conference took place on the evening of 14th March at the City Hall Port Elizabeth, and was addressed by the National President, Mrs. Sheena Duncan and Sir Richard Luyt, past principal of the University of Cape Town, who addressed the gathering on the subject of an end to conscription.

Mrs. Sheena Duncan, Mrs. Joyce Harris and Mrs. Ethel Walt took the Chair in rotation throughout Conference.

THURSDAY, 14TH MARCH. 3.30 to 5 P.M

1. One Minute's Silence was observed in memory of those who have died in detention.
2. Dedication was read by Mrs. Duncan
3. Welcome. Tessa Branch welcomed all delegates and observers to Conference. Mrs. Duncan read telegrams of support from Dr. Boesak, Ann Evans and Mary Grice. It was agreed that a telegram be sent from the Sash Conference to the Dependents' Conference which was meeting on the same day in Port Elizabeth. Message of cheer from Joy Alder.
4. Roll Call. Delegates introduced themselves. Border delegates would not be arriving until Friday morning.
Apologies from Betty Davenport ; Janet Davies.
(a) Demonstration. It was agreed that delegates would demonstrate in the foyer of the City Hall before the official opening of Conference at 8 p.m., against the refusal of bail for awaiting trial prisoners.

5. Press Committee. The following delegates would form the Press Committee, headed by Mrs. Di Bishop of Cape Western :-

Pessa Weinberg	Natal Midlands	Georgina Stevens	Natal Coastal
Laura Pollecutt	Transvaal	Tessa Branch	Cape Eastern
Gusta MacDonald	Albany.		

Mrs. Harris requested that three copies of all papers be given to Mrs. Mary Gibert, who was keeping the official records.

6. Agenda Variations. Mrs. Mary Burton suggested that the Conference discuss its responses and actions in the event of a police raid. Agreed, time permitting.

7. Minutes of 1984 Conference.

Amendments :

- (a) Ex-Headquarters Circular No. 9 - See Page Eighteen.
- (b) P. 2. Penultimate line - "explosions" not "explosives".
- (c) P. 6. Under Court Monitoring. The number of cases heard in the Commissioner's Court has dropped from over 9000 to about 8,400 (3, 209 is the number of convictions)
- (d) P.19. Under "Paper Concerning the Marriage Laws Affecting Africans", substitute the sentence below for the first sentence :

Noel Robb explained that the paper had been written by Nicola Peart. Since formulating the resolution standing on the agenda Cape Western had discussed the question with a variety of people, and the matter is very much more complicated than it seems."

8. Headquarters Reports. Papers 2, 3, and 4.

National Report presented by Mrs. Ethel Walt. Alteration to P. 6; 2nd last paragraph, "Sheena gave 46 talks" "locally" and not "overseas".

Adoption moved by Mary Burton and seconded by Ann Colvin.

Sue Joynt handed Headquarters the original of Tony Grogan's cartoon from the Cape Times re tractor demonstration.

Magazine Report. Mrs. Harris informed Conference of Jill Wentzel's retirement as Magazine Editor, and paid tribute to her tremendous efforts in improving the magazine. She introduced Glenda Webster as the incoming editor, who presented Jill Wentzel's report.

It was agreed that the separate Conference Booklet be discontinued, and that the May issue of SASH would be the Conference Issue.

Financial Report, presented by Mrs. Audrey Coleman.

- (a) Conference was informed that a full-time researcher, Penelope Perkins, had been employed on a national basis to research and collate material from all the Advice Offices. Her salary was funded by the Fund for Free Expression.
- (b) The cost of the magazine should be raised from R2.00 to R2.75. The unit cost would be approximately R2.50 this year and last year the magazine recorded a loss. Despite the extra funds now being received for the sale of the copyright Mrs. Coleman felt that the magazine should pay for itself.

Mary Burton proposed that the cost of the magazine remain at R2.00 seconded by Noel Robb. Proposal was defeated.

It was put to the vote and agreed that the price of the magazine be increased from R2.00 to R2.75.

Margaret Nash, supported by/---

Financial Report Cont/---

Margaret Nash, supported by Miriam Hepner, suggested that if the cost of the Magazine was to increase, the material should be consistent with the readership, that effective use be made of the covers and that ways and means of increasing the revenue be explored, giving consideration to the use of selective advertising. This was supported by Conference.

Composition of National Executive. Glenda Glover initiated discussion on the need to broaden the regional base of Headquarters National Executive.

There was general discussion of leadership in the Sash viz a viz the presidency and the need for training on a regional and national level so that more members would be in a position to take leadership roles.

Regions would discuss these issues during the coming year :-

- (a) The need for regional representation on the National Executive.
- (b) The involvement of individual members.
- (c) The possibility and complications of moving Headquarters.

FRIDAY, 15TH MARCH, 9 A.M to 1 P.M.

Mrs. Duncan was congratulated on her excellent and courageous presidential address.

Discussion regarding Conference reaction to a possible police raid resulted in a decision that the National Executive would speak on behalf of Conference, consulting when necessary and that delegates would sit in silence and not co-operate.

9. Regional Reports. Papers 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

Natal Midlands' Report was presented by Pessa Weinberg, Natal Coastal's by Ann Colvin and Cape Western's by Mary Burton.

Glenda Glover questioned Noel Robb on Cape Western's Bail Fund and its application. Su Trathen presented Transvaal's report and a standing ovation was given to Merle Boetge as the 1984 Star's Unsung Heroine.

There was a correction to the report to the effect that the Saturday Club is still in existence, and a vote of thanks was extended to Mrs. Margaret Kirk and all the office workers.

The Pretoria report was presented by Annica Van Gylswyk who pointed out that their membership was only 35. Zoe Riorden spoke to Cape Eastern's report highlighting the problems of a small membership, regional harassment and a conservative society, a problem shared by Pretoria.

Gusta MacDonald presented the Albany report pointing out their difficulty in keeping the work of the Sash going in Grahamstown.

They intend to concentrate their efforts on their Advice Office.

10. Advice Office Reports. Papers 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

These were presented by Sheena Duncan for Transvaal, Fidela Fouche for Natal Midlands, Jill Nicholson for Natal Coastal and Noel Robb for Cape Western. Marion Spies presented Pretoria's report on behalf of Mary Harrop-Allin and Gail Hood presented Cape Eastern's report.

Arising out of Cape Eastern's report there was discussion as to why children shot do not report to hospital.

It was reported that hospitals/---

It was reported that hospitals are required by law to report an operation to remove bullets, to the police. People are now too scared to go to hospital and often perform their own operations at home and then go to hospital. Discussion on this subject will be taken up at the afternoon session.

Albany's Advice Office Report was presented by Adrian Whisson on behalf of Dr. Marian Roux.

Sheena Duncan discussed the difficulty of the smaller regions in running their offices, pointing out that regions are having difficulty in manning their offices, problems of money and the problem of keeping offices open longer hours. She felt that it would be cheaper to employ a secretary to do the clerical work and typing instead of employing an advice office worker. She asked regions to budget for their needs for 1986. She wanted a budget including the cost of an advice office worker or secretary if needed, to be sent to her by May 1985.

National, if they are requested to do so, will undertake to pay for losses sustained to Regional offices which are burnt or gutted.

The question of dependency of clients was raised. Sheena Duncan made the point that advice office workers' function is to educate the client as to the law and the options available to them for dealing with the problem. When dealing with communities, problems need to be identified and the communities shown how they themselves can deal with their problems.

Training of people : Many offices are being opened up for training of advice workers. There are donors who will pay for this.

Sheena Duncan said she was willing to arrange work shops for regions who want to train advice workers.

Margaret Nash suggested that future advice office reports reflect the positive aspect of our work - not only the negative side.

ITEM 11 : COURT MONITORING.

Paper 19 "REPORT ON PASS COURTS - JOHANNESBURG"

Miriam Hepner presented the paper on behalf of Margo McWhirter.

Miriam Hepner recommended that the cases should be conducted in the language of the accused. She also called for free legal defence.

Statement No. 3 was drawn up.- Court Interpretation.

Black Sash National Conference expresses serious criticism of the quality of interpretation currently provided in the court. Many injustices occur, especially in the criminal courts, where the vast majority of Black accused are undefended and have little or no knowledge of law or procedure.

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

The function of Legal Aid Boards was discussed. It was agreed that they seem to function adequately. The question of the lawyers giving free defence was brought up - they should be applying for payment from the Board.

Statement No. 4 was drawn up - Free Legal Aid.

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

Black Sash conference, believing that justice is the right of all, recommends that the powers of the Legal Aid Board be extended in order to implement one of the recommendations of the Hoexter Commission, and that further avenues be investigated /---Page Six/

COURT MONITORING CONT/---Statement No. 4 - Free Legal Aid.

investigated with a view to providing legal assistance for everyone who needs it in both criminal and civil matters.

There was suggestion from the floor that Sash approach the Law Society and Chairman of Side Bar Association about administering the law. Cape Eastern pointed out that they have already written to Judges and Side Bars pointing out that sentences often lead to peoples' loss of urban rights.

ITEM 12 : DISCUSSION OF DR. VILJOEN'S STATEMENT ON SECTION 10.

AMENDMENTS was deleted.

ITEM 13 : INFLUX CONTROL CAMPAIGN - Cape Western.

Noel Robb reported on the campaign which is to be started off by a meeting. All organisations working on influx control are to be invited. Sheena Duncan will attend. After the launch meeting, a "braintrust", re abandoning influx control, is to be set up. It will be a forward looking trust to brainstorm what would happen if influx control was dropped. Noel Robb called for this to be taken up as a National campaign. It was agreed by Conference that Cape Western send a written outline of their plans and details to regions to decide whether they want to take up the issue.

FRIDAY 15TH MARCH 2 - 3.30 P.M

ITEM 14 : EVENTS IN THE EASTERN CAPE.

Mathew Goniwe of Cradock was introduced to the conference by Sheena Duncan and outlined the development of events in the Cradock area from November 1983 up to present time.

Sheena Duncan then mentioned that he was a listed person having previously been in detention.

The contents of his speech may therefore not be minuted.

He was given a standing ovation by Conference.

Mkhuseli Jack was introduced to the meeting by Sheena Duncan and he spoke on the Causes of the Black Youth's Anger. He is the Chairman of PEYCO. Mkhuseli Jack also outlined the issues involved in the present week end work stoppage e.g., dissatisfaction with local councils as unrepresentative of the people's wishes, increase in rents, unemployment, police intimidation etc.,

Mr. Jack was warmly thanked by Conference for his address.

General discussion then followed with Mrs. Van Gylswyk outlining how similar problems in the Pretoria / ^{Soshanguwe} Atteridgeville area with students had led to the closure of schools and the Technical College.

Mr. Michael Mkula was then introduced to Conference. He outlined developments since 1976, since which time the youth have played an ever increasing role in the Blacks' struggle for political recognition. He spoke of how police action both unites and divides the people and called for the government to speak to the real leaders of the Black communities.

ITEM 15 : REPORTS FROM REGIONAL DELEGATES ABOUT RESISTANCE AND RESPONSE IN OTHER AREAS.

Merle Beetge outlined the experiences of the people of Grasmere and Sebokeng, mentioning severe police action and harassment of the communities.

Mr. Goniwe and Mr. Jack mentioned the failure of their attempt to get the police to withdraw from the townships.

From the general discussion/---

ITEM 15 : CONT/--- REPORTS FROM REGIONAL DELEGATES.....

From the general discussion of the afternoon it was clear that the Black Community leaders still showed great willingness to talk about solutions to their problems, but that intransigence on the part of the authorities is leading to a hardening of attitudes, amongst the communities themselves.

PAPER NO. 20 - TEMBISA - AN INFORMAL LOOK AT A TOWNSHIP was presented by Gill De Vlieg.

PAPER NO. 21 - "GRAHAMSTOWN UNREST AND BOYCOTTS" was presented by Margaret Barker

VAAL TRIANGLE UNREST - Barbara Creasy reported, on the situation in Evaton, Sebokeng, Bapalong and Sharpeville.

The main problems were again rent increases, unemployment and retrenchment. A University of Stellenbosch survey shows that 25% of the people of this area are living below the breadline. Rents are among the highest in the country. There was also discontent with the local councils and the conduct of the councillors. Civic, Anti-rent increase group, the U.D.F. and Women's groups joined to oppose further increases.

On the 1st September 1984 2000 people led what was supposed to be a peaceful demonstration to the Administration Board Offices. Fighting broke out and many people were killed and hundreds injured.

Ann Colvin from Natal Coastal, introduced their guest speaker, David Ginsberg, Senior lecturer in Sociology, Natal University.

Mr. Ginsberg gave a lecture on the basis of Socialism vs. Capitalism with emphasis on the workers' ability to take an active role in production viz a viz his liberation, relating this to the S.A. Situation and a few European examples.

(See Conference papers for the full context of this lecture)

Much discussion followed about the practical realities of socialism; about the attitude of S.A. Blacks to our capitalistic society; their feeling of exploitation and the State's use of capitalism as a means of repression, through apartheid; the powerlessness of the propertyless class.

Despite a strong feeling by some members that the discussion of Socialism was irrelevant to the Agenda, it was generally felt that the issues raised by this discussion were relevant to our principles in Sash, i.e. promotion of justice, which in turn has to do with power structures and privileges.

Mr. Ginsberg summed up by pointing out that despite the fact the whites had the vote, the blacks, in terms of their worker class, had the power, and that it was more pertinent to talk of class struggle in South Africa, not a colour struggle,

Mrs. Duncan concluded by saying that Mr. Ginsberg's argument did not take into consideration the 41% of S.A's population which will not be able to find employment in the formal sector by the year two thousand. These people will never be "workers" and cannot be left out of either analysis or proposals for the future,

SATURDAY 16TH MARCH - 9 A.M to 1 P.M.

Mrs. Duncan opened the session by suggesting that Conference members make donations to help pay for the tyres slashed on Thursday evening. This was unanimously agreed to. Mrs. Duncan also informed Conference that Matthew Goniwe had applied for Associate Membership of Sash, much to the delight of Conference.

The delegate from Border arrived.

Mrs. Duncan expressed the shock of Conference at the final news in the morning papers of the closure of the Rand Daily Mail and the Sunday Express. Telegrams were sent to both papers, and Conference then drew up a statement in response to P. W. Botha's comments on the closure of the Rand Daily Mail :

Statement No. 2 : Closure of Rand Daily Mail.

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

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

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

Mrs. Blackburn addressed Conference and both shocked and stunned everyone present by her report on the children who had recently been moved from Uitenhage to Rooihill Prison in Port Elizabeth. The children, mostly under the age of 16, were not being held separately, but were housed with adult criminals and there were reports of sodomy practices.

Mrs. Blackburn then went on to read out a list of affidavits on police brutality. She mentioned also that water and electricity had been cut off in the townships, to co-incide with the week-end work stoppage.

Conference immediately decided to to respond to the situation and after much discussion, the following course of action was decided upon :-

1. Make approach to a local judge, the Chief Magistrate and Chairman of the local Bar Association.
2. Make representation to the local Medical and Dental Council.
3. Apply for an interdict.
4. Make statement for Local and Overseas press.
5. Approach Chief Buthelezi re presence of Zulu police in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage townships - why they were there and who sent them.
6. Prepare a Memorandum setting out all the affidavits to send to Le Grange and Press.
7. Regions to send an analysis of their regions to National Executive as soon as possible.
8. Make contact with parents of children in prison.
9. Contact Child Welfare re Children's Act.

Mrs. Blackburn then reported/—
Page Nine/

Mrs. Blackburn then reported on the situation in the provincial hospitals with regard to patients coming in with bullet wounds and how doctors are being forced to comply with police orders. She had taken this up with NAMDA, but had had no reply so far.

It was agreed that the Chairman of Medical and Dental Council be informed of this, when the delegation from Conference met with him.

In view of the fact that the morning session was supposed to be a closed session for group discussion, and in order not to disrupt proceedings any further, the following people were elected to form an action group to do what they could about the immediate problem of the children in prison, and they would then report back to Conference :

Molly Blackburn ; Barbara Creasy ; Beverly Runciman ; Di Bishop ; Solveig Piper
Liz Thompson ; Joann Yawitch, Fran Luyt ; Ethel Walt, Audrey Coleman and
Sheena Duncan.

ITEM 16 : CLOSED SESSION.

The remainder of Conference then divided into the groups for discussion on violence and Black Sash's response to the present violent situation. Working within the confines of a pre-set list of questions, the groups reported back :

Question 1. The majority felt that violence was synonymous with the present "liberation" struggle. It was inevitable, rather than necessary or desirable and each group conceded this reluctantly.

Question 2. Sash must take a non-violent stand, but should also outline and highlight the reasons for the violence and the counter-violence.

In summing up, Conference felt that Sash must give support to Non-violent change and seek ways to promote this type of change.

Cape Western reported on their workshop on non-violent tactics, which other regions could maybe take up this year as the problem is on-going.

ITEM 17 : ADVICE OFFICE TRUST.

Mrs. Duncan briefly outlined the reasons for the formation of the Trust Fund.

The Advice Office of the Black Sash needed to be in a position to apply for exemption from Donations Tax, so that the Advice Office could then receive money from various trust funds. At present, our aims and objects do not support an exemption from Donations Tax. However, if the Advice Office is separated from the Black Sash office and an Advice Office Trust Fund was set up, we could then apply for an exemption from Tax and the Advice Office Trust Fund could receive monies from various bodies who at present are precluded from giving us funds.

The separation would be in financial terms only and would not be a physical one.

Discussion followed on how this change would affect the present situation in Western Cape Region where they share an office with Race Relations.

This problem might have to be solved on a Regional basis.

Clarification will also have to be sought on

- i) the payment of G.S.T. on our magazine and booklet sales etc., and
- ii) payment of tax on monies already being received e.g., The Ford Foundation and Cebemo etc., and
- iii) whether or not this Trust Fund will restrict the flow of money and usage from various sources.

Mrs. Duncan stressed the need/--- Page 10/

ITEM 17 : ADVICE OFFICE TRUST CONT/---

Mrs. Duncan stressed the need for tighter book-keeping control in the regions and the need for annual budgets, once this Trust is established, as irresponsible control of money received, now that we are financially on a better footing, was the easiest way to lay ourselves open to trouble.

Mrs. Duncan then put the resolution to Conference :

RESOLUTION.

This Conference agrees that the National Executive be authorised to proceed with the establishment of an Advice Office Trust, or Regional Advice Office Trusts, in order to separate the advice and community support activities of the Black Sash from the political activities of the organisation, should this be necessary after further discussions with legal and financial advisers.

17.1

This was seconded by Mrs. Coleman and carried unanimously by Conference.

Once clarification is received from our financial and legal advisers, regions will be sent a memorandum clearly setting out the position and its application to each region.

ITEM 18 : REVIEW OF REGIONAL FINANCES AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS.

Mrs. Duncan led the regions into an informal discussion on general regional finances, stressing the importance of budgeting for all regional activities in advance of each financial year. This would also assist National in their regional allocations.

ITEM 19 : CONSTITUTION GROUP.

Mrs. Harris gave a brief background to the formation of the group, explaining how the impetus had been lost once the New Constitution had been passed.

The group had become issue orientated only. The Opposition party of Bophutathswana had joined in 1984. During the last year it had been difficult to get the group together because of the detention of members of the group and the difficulty in getting members to meet together because, in prevailing circumstances, there are growing tensions between a number of opposition constituencies.

SATURDAY 16TH - 2 P.M to 5.30 P.M

ITEM 20 : REMOVALS.

Paper No. 22 TRAC REPORT was presented by Joanne Yawitch. She read the statement given out by Moses Ngema after the judgement going against the Ngema Committee, and the "Press statement from Communities under Threat of Removal" Paper No. 23.

Paper No. 24. "Some Threatened Cleared and Relocation Areas in Natal" This was presented by Pessa Weinberg.

Report Back on Prison Action.

Sheena Duncan announced that a meeting had been arranged with the Chief Magistrate of Port Elizabeth and Uitenhago, the Chairman of the Bar Council and possibly the Chairman of the Side Bar. Captain Treunicht of the Prisons Department had also been asked to the meeting.

Black Sash representatives at the meeting would be :

S. Duncan ; A. Coleman ; Z. Riorden and M. Burton.

On Sunday, a meeting had been arranged with the Chairman of the Medical and Dental Council, for 9 a.m.

Molly Blackburn ; D. Bishop, S. Duncan and Dr. E. Thompson would be the Black Sash representatives. Mrs. De Tolly and the Chairperson then warmly thanked Solly Schkol:ne for his efforts on our behalf.

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ITEM 20 CONT/---

Paper No. 25. Khayelitsha. This was presented by Jenny De Tolly.

Margaret Nash then spoke on Khayelitsha in Human Rights Perspective, the second half of Paper 25.

Paper No. 26. "Housing in Grahamstown" was introduced by

Paper No. 27. "Hambanati Story" was presented by Georgina Stevens.

She highlighted certain aspects of housing in the Natal Coastal area. The magnitude of the housing shortage in the prescribed Durban area is enormous. No new houses have been built in Lamontville since 1958 and the average occupation of a 2 bed house in Lamontville and Chesterville is 10 per house.

The PNAB has a vast amount of money invested and this matter has been taken up by the Press.

Paper No. 28. On Farm Workers was presented by Mary Burton on behalf of Laurine Platzky. There was a proposal that Black Sash produce a booklet "You and the Farm Workers" and Ethel Walt suggested that TRAC or the Removals Committee could do this.

Brief discussion on removals and housing then followed.

ITEM 21. PENSIONS CAMPAIGN. This was presented by Sheena Duncan. Copies of the booklet "You and Your State Pension" were handed out. Copies in other Black languages were to follow.

ITEM 22. "AFRICAN MARRIAGE LAWS"

Paper 29. This paper was presented by Fran Luyt on behalf of Nicola Peart, Cape Western. Noel Robb mentioned that Cape Western had convened a discussion meeting on this, with Black women. Joyce Harris reported that in the Transvaal, Women's Legal Status Committee were working on this for us.

ITEM 22. U.I.F.

Sheena Duncan reported that the U.I.F. booklet had been delayed because of changes in the law.

A brief discussion followed, with Beulah Rollnick reading a report on the Johannesburg situation. Solveig Piper from Natal Coastal said that they were monitoring their situation very closely, paying particular attention to the T.V.C. countries. Transkei is reputed to have 12 million Rand in its fund, but it is difficult to monitor the number of unemployed and what proportion are receiving U.I.F. Solveig Piper suggested putting pressure on Mr. Vermeulen in Pretoria. She pointed out that Blacks with Section 10 rights should be able to claim U.I.F. in South Africa.

Any information about payment of U.I.F. should be sent to Solveig Piper in Durban for her research. Sue Joynt for Cape Western pointed out the difficulties in monitoring their region because the geographic area was so great.

ITEM 23. NAMIBIA.

Paper 30 : "South Africa's Ongoing Occupation of Namibia".

This paper was prepared by Molly Blackburn and Di Bishop and presented by Di Bishop, who briefly pointed out the importance of fostering an awareness of South Africa's role there and pushing for the implementation of Resolution 435 without further delay. It is essential that Koevoet's actions are investigated. Operation Thunder Chariot cost R24 million - does this practice exercise suggest invasion of Angola through South Africa?

General discussion then followed/---

ITEM 23 CONT/---

General discussion then followed. The issue of conscription was raised and the need to conscientise both prospective conscripts and the general public about South Africa's involvement in Namibia. The following points were put forward as a means of doing this :-

1. Support of E.C.C.
2. Formulate a statement incorporating official reasons.
3. Publicise by showing video material and educating people.
4. Catholic Bishops' Report should be widely distributed.

Conference then drew up a statement on the Namabian situation :-

Statement No. 6 - NAMIBIA.

The Black Sash reiterates its demand for :-

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

We note the possible pending cross-border raid into Angola with alarm. We reject the official reasons given for the declaration of large areas of Namibia's borders as "security areas" and demand an answer to the question: "What is the South African government hiding?"

Di Bishop summed up the discussion by saying that it should be a priority for White South Africans to say "GET OUT!" and raise the awareness right here at home.

Ethel Walt mentioned the emergency list that Headquarters has for getting at the right people, plus their extensive mailing list.

SUNDAY 17TH - 9 A.M to 1 P.M

Joyce Harris opened the meeting by thanking Cape Eastern for a most enjoyable party the previous evening.

ITEM 24 - Barbara Creech gave her "Report on Repression"

Paper 31.

Discussion followed with reference to members of families who had disappeared in 1976; these families were watched for years afterwards and consequently many parents were too scared to ask for help in tracing lost/missing members of their families.

Joanne Yawitch reported that T.V. monitoring was still going on in prison cells and lights were often left on in cells for 24 hours, which had a detrimental effect on detainees' health. Margaret Nash reported that the S.A. Society of Psychologists had recently adopted a code of ethics for treatment of detainees.

Audrey Coleman felt that the Medical profession's whole treatment of detainees needed consideration, as people were being sent back into solitary after receiving medical attention for its effects, and there had been suicide attempts reported.

Barbara Creech also reported on the bad food and its effects and how withholding of food parcels was being used as a means of coercion. The question of women prisoners was also discussed, with particular reference to Albertina Sisulu, who was at that time being kept in solitary confinement.

Statement No. 1 was then put to the Conference, "Transvaal Regional Statement on Detentions". It was accepted after several alterations had been made to the wording.

Statement No. 1 : DETENTIONS.

It is noted that there were an estimated 1149 detentions in 1984 which is the highest number since 1976/77. This lays bare the hollowness of the Government's pretensions of consensus rule and reform.

The call for "Charge or Release" in South Africa is inappropriate because in this society the majority of people are voteless. They have no say in the formulation of the laws which govern them and do not respect the laws designed to subjugate them nor feel bound by them because, to quote a lawyer whose assessment of Section 54 of the Internal Securities Act, is :-

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

This leads to :

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

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

ITEM 25 : Report back on present crisis.

Mary Burton was asked to report back on the Saturday afternoon meeting, in connection with the children in prison. They had met with the Chief Magistrate of Port Elizabeth, the Chief Magistrate of Uitenhage, Messrs. Steyn and Groenewald, the Prison Commander, the Chairman of the Bar Council and two vice chairmen of the Side Bar.

The story was told, and Audrey Coleman gave details of what she had been told by parent.

The Chief Magistrate immediately replied that he had visited the children, and gave the assurance that they were being kept apart from other prisoners, and that he had total confidence in his staff. He denied the possibility of the allegations being true. We were unfortunately unable to give names and case numbers, and they were not prepared to assist on this point.

They were most unco-operative. Visits were allowed by parents, but as the children were awaiting trial prisoners, these could only take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

No Social Worker had visited the children, as no provision is made in the prisons act for this for awaiting trial prisoners. They eventually conceded that visits could be made by parent to-day (Sunday) as a special favour. Sheena Duncan requested that forty parents be allowed to visit. This was refused, and permission was given for five parents to visit. The Sash would have to apply to Pretoria for permission to visit the children. No denials were made on the fact that children from ten years of age were being held.

The Chief Magistrate/---P.14/

The Chief Magistrate said he had received no complaints of ill-treatment from the children. The Commander of the Prison said children could come to his office and complain at any time. Sheena Duncan said we would have to study the Children's Act. Miriam Hepner asked if it would be possible for an application to be made for a Judge to visit the prison, but not a Judge from this area.

It was reported that parents would be coming into the advice office at 3.30 this afternoon if they could, due to the stay away and problems in the township. It is hoped that statements can be made, and names established to Lawyers for Human Rights, and Chris Nicholson can be approached to make urgent bail applications on behalf of the children. It was suggested that the Red Cross and Child Welfare should be contacted. Sheena Duncan made the point very strongly that we were unfortunately badly prepared in not having names etc.,

The final outcome was that 5 parents were granted permission to visit the children, but Sash was not given permission.

Di Bishop then reported on her meeting with Dr. Hofmeyer of the Medical and Dental Council. He had expressed concern, but said that he was unaware of any abuses at the time. He said that the Cape Director of Hospital Services was coming to Port Elizabeth to discuss the whole question. He also suggested that Sash speak to Professor S. Strauss about treatment of prisoners.

Mr. S. Schkolne suggested that a complete report be drawn up and submitted to him for comment.

The discussion was closed by Mrs. Harris on the note that we had acted as best we could and could now only hope that something would come of it all. We had set in motion an important enquiry, and let the authorities know. A team was chosen from Conference to take statements from parents at the Advice Office that afternoon.

ITEM 26 : MAGAZINE DISCUSSION.

Mrs. Nicholson of Natal Coastal Region said that they were extremely unhappy about the latest issue of the magazine, which featured articles on both John Kane Berman and Professor Laurie Schlemmer. Many people found their views totally unacceptable and Natal Coastal had been put in an embarrassing position. They asked if these articles really reflected Sash's aims. It was pointed out that only the editorial was official, as stated on the back of the magazine.

Glenda Webster replied that she did not feel in a position to comment on past issues, but had already agreed to work with a magazine committee. She also regretted that Jill Wentzel was not present to put her views. It was felt that different points of view could be accommodated in the magazine. Glenda Webster said that finally, we were all responsible for the magazine. If regions did not bother to submit articles and reports, they could not complain when things went into the magazine with which they did not agree. It was decided to have regions writing letters to the editor on this matter, and putting their views across.

Statement No. No. 5 : The Minimum Wage. was finally accepted, with the proviso that we have always supported the scrapping of influx control.

Black Sash condemns Mr. Zac De Beer's call for the scrapping of the minimum wage. This move has been welcomed by the business sector as a solution to skyrocketing inflation, and as a move towards the creation of a free economy.

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

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

Statement No. 5 - The Minimum Wage Cont/---

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

To scrap the minimum wage at a time of such high unemployment can only lead to a decline in overall living standards. The constantly increasing cost of living will exacerbate this. Most importantly, it is a move to undermine and weaken the trade union movement.

ITEM 27 : REPRESSION AND DISCUSSION ON BOPUTHATSWANA.

Paper No. 32 "Ethnic Divisions and Repression in the Bantustans" was presented by Joanne Yawitch, together with Paper No. 33 "Appendix - Case studies of Harassment of Non-Tswanas in Bophuthatswana".

Annica Van Gylswyk then presented Paper No. 34 - "Pensions in the Winterveld".

Discussion on Bophuthatswana followed. This area has been held up as an "ideal homeland" and there is a growing nationalism that is leading to effective prosecution of non-Tswanas. Annica Van Gylswyk reported on a SACBC Justice and Peace Workshop on pensions, repression, nationalism, wages in Bophuthatswana. She also reported that the Bophuthatswana Land Act had been amended to allow white farmers to buy land in Bophuthatswana, although squatters cannot, because they are non-Tswanas. At Klipgat people were being raided in the middle of the night and asked for citizenship proof.

Joanne Yawitch mentioned that according to the Bophuthatswana Constitution, they can apply for citizenship after 5 years, but Sash has never known anyone to succeed. The authorities appear concerned that if they do obtain citizenship, they will then be able to claim pensions.

Is the Bophuthatswana Bill of Rights of any value? There is no real in-depth exposure being done about what happens in Bophuthatswana. It was suggested that we should either produce a booklet, or article, on the concept of the Bill of Rights and its abrogation.

Solveig Piper told Conference that employers get R110 cash back on wages paid to workers in Homelands, and that Unions are banned.

She also mentioned the fact that foreign workers, e.g., Taiwanese are now coming into the Bantustans to work, with obvious implications.

It was decided, with the consent of Conference, that as many members of conference had to leave by lunchtime, the Agenda would again have to be changed.

ITEM 28 : ELECTIONS OF NATIONAL OFFICE BEARERS.

1. Nominations for National President were called for:

Sheena Duncan was the only nominee.

She agreed to stand again, stating very firmly though, that this was positively her last year in office:

She was unanimously elected with acclaim.

2. Nominations for Vice Presidents/---

ITEM 28 : ELECTION OF NATIONAL OFFICE BEARERS CONT/---

2. Nominations for Vice Presidents were called for.

Joyce Harris ; Ethel Walt and Audrey Coleman were nominated.

Joyce Harris and Ethel Walt were elected.

Sheena Duncan told Conference that Cape Western was unable to take Headquarters this year, but they would be prepared to do so next year.

The Constitution would have to be restructured to accommodate the change in Headquarters, and to make provision for possible regional representation on Headquarters Committee.

SUNDAY 17TH - 1 P.M to 3 P.M

Sheena Duncan informed Conference that Natal Coastal had kindly offered to host the 1986 Conference from Thursday 13th March to Sunday 18th March 1986.

The Koinonia Centre at Botha's Hill has been suggested as a possible venue.

ITEM 29 : END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN.

Mrs. Stewart reported for Cape Eastern that they were a very new group that did not yet have a name. They are considering working with International Year of the Youth.

They have held a workshop, and wish to educate the community and use the press, but the area is rather hostile at the moment.

Paper No. 35 : "Follow up on Conscription in Grahamstown" was presented by Teral Bowen for Albany.

She reported on a well-attended meeting that had been held. They call themselves the Grahamstown Advice Centre. Two weeks later there had been a commando call up and this group was approached by many affected people. Many people who were not eligible for call up were called, and came to them for advice. They are considering opening an office once a week.

Natal Coastal - Ann Colvin reported on a very full programme in this region, mentioning that COSGS are also very active in their region.

Paper 36 : Transvaal End Conscription Campaign - This was presented by Glenda Glover.

Paper 37 : End Conscription Campaign : Cape Western - this report was presented by Beverley Runciman, who then asked Conference to endorse the Declaration of the E.C.C. This was unanimously agreed to

Beverley Runciman mentioned that copies of a video were available for use. The Fund for Free Expression would provide funds for these copies to be made.

Representatives from each region were elected to form a contact system within the Sash :-

T. Bowen	Grahamstown
A. Colvin	}
P. Geerds	
S. Stewart	Port Elizabeth
F. Fouche	Pietermaritzburg
G. Glover	Johannesburg
B. Runciman	Cape Town

ITEM 29 : END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN CONT/---

Beverley Runciman informed Conference that there was to be a national meeting in Johannesburg on 5th and 6th July, and it was important to send the regional representatives.

Sheena Duncan confirmed that if there was a shortage of funds that might prevent some representatives going, they were to contact Headquarters.

Beverley Runciman outlined the E.C.C. programme for the rest of the year.

General discussion followed as to how to get the E.C.C. message across in view of difficulties, as it is a touchy subject with the authorities and public.

Teral Bowen suggested going into the private schools via the school chaplains to inform the boys of the options of being a C.O.

Mary Burton then outlined what Cape Western were doing with regard to the schools, highlighting the "leaders of the future" aspect, re cadets, which is not compulsory. Annica Van Gylswyk also suggested going into the parishes to support and inform boys who might be having problems.

Beverley Runciman outlined the distinction between the E.C.C. and COSGS and the need to keep the two separate.

Joanne Yawitch mentioned that Transvaal region was going to use the debate between the E.C.C. and the PFP as a focus.

Mary Burton proposed that Conference adopt the Civil Rights League's call for recognition by the government of :-

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

This was seconded by Beverley Runciman and endorsed by Conference.

ITEM 30 : EDUCATION.

Paper 39 : "The Crisis in Black Education".

Judith Hawarden read her paper, mentioning that the paper was already out of date, due to recent closing of schools in Cradock and Tembisa. Annica Van Gylswyk spoke briefly to her paper, "Black Education for Conference 1985" Paper No. 40.

She also mentioned that she had put together a dossier on the subject, having been so involved with it during the last year.

Beverley Runciman mentioned the Education Charter instigated by NUSAS COSAS ASASO etc., and suggested that Sash could make contact with this group.

SACC was also setting up an educational taskforce. There was a recognition of the need to find a whole new type of education for the South African situation.

Netty Davidoff paid tribute to Judith Hawarden's work on the Education sub-committee in the Transvaal, in getting it off the ground again.

Sheena Duncan reiterated the value of getting Anita Kromberg of IFOR to give a workshop, so that people are prepared to be effective in a state of crisis.

Final amendments to several/---

ITEM 30 : EDUCATION CONT/---

Final amendments to several of the statements from Conference were then accepted, and handed to the press representative.

Jeanette Davidoff paid warm tribute to all the people involved in conference, to the spirit of the conference and to the vast amount of knowledge that had been pooled by the resources of the various regions and their members.

Glenda Glover congratulated Molly Blackburn and Cape Eastern for their courage, in the face of such opposition, as had come out in Conference discussion.

Mary Burton then gave thanks to Headquarters for their work during the year, and in helping with the conference.

The Conference closed at 3.30 p.m after several members from other regions had offered to help in the Port Elizabeth Advice Office in handling the present crisis.

7. Minutes of 1984 Conference (Amendment) - Continued from Page Three.

(a) Ex-Headquarters Circular No. 9/1984.

On page 2, Section 5 (ii) a, the second sentence should read :

"This would be a significant force in undermining the National Party's support base in building non-racial opposition".

CLOSURE : 17TH MARCH, 1985.

DATE.....

SIGNATURE