

Repression Portfolio Report
February 1991 to February 1992

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1. Regional Monitoring

At the end of last year's repression portfolio report, Ros Bush proposed the formation of a regional monitoring group in order to extend our base from what has been essentially court monitoring to embrace urban and social, as well as repression monitoring in conjunction with the Advice Office\rural field work already being covered. The need for clarity on issues arising in these areas in the context of political jockeying that is going on during this period of transition, sources of credible information and the sharing of monitoring skills has become increasingly crucial for Sash if it is to remain effective as a viable human rights based organisation. With this in view a repression monitoring group within the new regional council was formed and splendidly supportive others have been drawn in from the general membership.

1.1 A Monitoring Workshop

Fifteen Black Sash members ranging from the Executive, Quartet, Regional Councillors to ordinary membership attended an all day workshop organised by Rosalind Bush and council members in support. Derek Fine of LEAP was the key speaker and besides taking us through recent changes in legislation, he instructed in statement and affidavit taking and provided us with relevant media produced by LEAP. Annemarie Hendrikz provided us with invaluable advice as a result of her rural fieldworker experience. Derek brought a copy of the BBC, Channel 4 video "Children of God" which was shot in Cape Town with the riot police. The idea of "media" monitoring was introduced and its implementation discussed. The names of both active and non active monitors were taken to be supplemented later by branch members.

1.2 Regional 'non-active' monitoring group

The concept of 'media' monitoring is designed to encourage a far wider membership participation in non-active monitoring of a broad range of issues. From her home base, a monitor may choose to cover any socio-political issue that interests her and follow it in any media she has access to, be it newspapers, radio, television, magazines, etc., of her choice. The issues we have chosen to highlight are: social welfare; squatters; land and housing; education; political trends; legislation and local government; women's issues and the Sash in print; as well as violence, the police and the SADF; from media both here and overseas. Relevant cuttings of reports, articles, and photographs are delivered to the Regional Office the week before Regional Council, so that any report or comment from a monitor on notable information collected may be discussed by the quartet or in council with a view to action or collected for future reference. Individual monitors have been compiling scrapbooks of the separate issues and supply fortnightly reports and comments where appropriate. Current cuttings and photos of interest are put up on media boards in the Regional Office for all to see. There is an urgent need for a 'non-active' monitor to co-ordinate this group, service the 'media' boards, and encourage more non-active members to help with scrapbooks and critical analysis of the prevailing situation in their chosen issue of interest.

1.3 Regional 'active' monitoring group

For those of us who can spare some time and be called on at short notice, we have found our services increasingly called on over the year offering us ample opportunity for valuable learning experience in grassroots urban and rural interaction. We have monitored marches; taken statements in groups, or individually; provided transport; attended meetings when our presence has been requested; attended

Press Conferences and demonstrations; attended court cases; and have witnessed the tragic consequences of urban socio-political violence. Perhaps, most important of all, we have forged firm links with other caring and concerned organisations which has greatly enhanced our opportunity to learn, make valuable township contacts and co-ordinate our efforts in mutual concern and intent through joint forums.

1.4 The Resource Forum

The first of such forums was formed in mid-July. It was initiated by Ann Oglethorpe of the Quaker Peace Centre in conjunction with Sue Collin of the Centre for Intergroup Studies (CIS) at UCT, and arose out of a growing concern and perceived need for a support system for their Quaker field-workers, Albert Dayile and David Mkhize in concert with the UMAC (Urban Monitoring and Awareness Campaign) field workers, Stef Snel and Rachel Browne. The Black Sash was invited to join with representatives from WPCC, SACCI, LEAP and various monitoring agencies who came intermittently. The forum met weekly and the main focus of concern has been on the continuing violence in black-townships, its cause, who is involved in it, and who is behind it. To this end we heard from the field workers the current situations and heard from them what their essential needs were and how we could best serve these immediately and in the future in areas of mediation, conflict resolution and community confidence building. Some of us, in turn, were able to respond to emergencies with transport; take statements with the help of Albert or David as interpreters; visit victims of violence with them; and witness for ourselves the devastation of homes in fire bomb attacks; the evidence of police incursion in late night or early morning raids; the sheer hopelessness of the homeless and destitute; and keep in touch with the Khayelitsha Advice Office and civic structures in Nyanga in particular. Scotty Morton, wearing both her Quaker and Black Sash hats offered a day's help per week in the UMAC office. Lu Harding and I were available at the end of a phone for active response and Rosalind Bush put her mind to forward planning and analysis and soon motivated for a broader based inter-organisational forum on the lines of the Black Sash initiated Peace Action Forum in Johannesburg.

1.5 The Peace Alliance

The outcome of Rosalind Bush's motivation and evergrowing realisation of the wider needs of the Resource Forum in its efforts to combat violence, the effects of violence, and build for peace in communities against all socio-economic odds, resulted in an attempt to draw in other and more

diverse organisations with a view to pooling and co-ordinating resources. Objectives identified at the outset were the need to establish an emergency relief fund for the victims of the repeated Khayelitsha burnings and elsewhere; convening a larger and more effective monitoring group; finding finance for future development and reconstruction projects in the urban areas worst affected by the violence. Lists of organisations were compiled at the Resource Forum, and invitations processed and sent out from the Black Sash Regional Office with the kind help of Judy Woodward and Scotty Morton, for the first meeting held in mid-September organised by the Black Sash and chaired by Anne Hill. At this meeting the call went out for a securely based co-ordinated co-operative effort to cope with the social consequences of violence; monitor its perpetrators, progress and effects; and find ways and means to expose and combat both. Three working groups have been formed; a welfare group including representatives of organisations such as SHAWCO, Red Cross, St. John's, SACLA, and Church groupings; a monitoring group with representatives from the Black Sash, UMAC, Quaker Peace, CIS, LRC, NADEL, IDASA and similar organisations; and a 'development' group including representatives from some of the above organisations and others hopefully in the future from business organisations whose financial support is going to be crucial for future development planning. Earlier fortnightly meetings concentrated on the complexities of the 'taxi war' with critical input from Helen Zille in her capacity as a consultant to the City Council. The need for a large 'peace' initiative hosted by the Mayor and Archbishop Tutu was discussed and eventually implemented in September.

With the winding up of the Resource Forum early this year and the concentration of resources into this Peace Alliance Forum we believe that the momentum started in mid-1991 will be able to gather in strength, commitment and efficacy in 1992. A notable outcome of both the Resource Forum and the Peace Alliance has been a joint forum on policing which Rosalind Bush will now report on:

1.6 Joint Forum of Policing

is a forum of organisations concerned about the role of the police in Peninsula violence. Since August field monitors from Black Sash, Urban Monitoring and Awareness Committee (UMAC), and the ANC Womens League have been interviewing victims of the violence in Khayelitsha and KTC, and have collected statements and affidavits. These contain numerous allegations of police involvement in attacks on residents of Khayelitsha (during the nights of 3 and 7 September 1991) and on homes in KTC Squatter Camp (2 and 5 October 1991). Also many allegations of police misconduct have been made

concerning attacks on and harrassment of ANC members in Khayelitsha.

The ANC Womens League highlighted these in a memorandum to the Minister of Law and Order. In response a special investigating unit was set up to investigate such allegations.

Simultaneously a forum of organisations met to decide on a course of action. Organisations represented on this forum were the ANC, ANC Womens League, Black Sash, Centre for Intergroup Studies, IDASA, Quaker Peace Committee, UMAC, United Civic Association and Western Province Council of Churches.

On 11 October 1991 the joint forum met with the Regional Commissioner of police, Major General Nic Acker and a team of senior police officers. The mayor and deputy mayor of Cape Town were also present. The forum proposed certain urgent interim measures to address the violence in Khayelitsha and elsewhere in the Peninsula until such time as the regional structures for the Peace Accord were set up (a copy of the summary of the meeting between the forum and the police team - the proposals and responses). The outcome of this meeting was the prospect of improved channels of communication between monitoring groups and the police and a commitment on the part of the police to rebuild trust between themselves and the community through proper policing practices.

A sub-committee with members from the forum and the police delegation was mandated by the meeting to deal with the proposal for the establishment of an Independmdant Monitoring Team (IMT) clarifying and coming to a common understanding of monitoring and the co-operation that could be expected from the police. This sub-committee - on which the Black Sash was represented - met on 15 October. The police representatives, both senior SAP legal men, were agreeable in principle to the establishment, of an independent monitoring team under the auspices of the Cape Town City Council, and that such a team would have the active co-operation of the police (e.g. the riot squad would keep the IMT informed about crises in the townships which called for the riot squads presence or action). However they emphasized that they would have to consult within the SAP and with the riot squad as to the practical implications and would come back to us the following week with their response.

Meanwhile the Joint Forum component of the sub-committee held several meetings to discuss the structure and functioning of the envisaged IMT and drew up a memo for the Cape Town City Council with the motivation for and details of the proposed IMT. The police cancelled the next meeting

of the sub-committee saying they were still consulting with police headquarters. Weeks passed before we finally had a response - negative. The police (riot squad) were not prepared to liaise with the IMT on any formal basis. Monitoring groups were free to carry on their monitoring activities as before.

With the assistance of the Legal Resource Centre, UMAC the Black Sash and the ANC Women's League continued to submit affidavits and evidence to the special investigating unit with the hope that investigations would lead to prosecution of those who had been perpetrating the violence. To date no arrests have been made in any of the cases opened. Investigations have been completed in only about four cases out of approximately 30 and these have been forwarded to a "Major General" before being sent to the Attorney General who will decide whether or not to prosecute.

In November we were informed that the investigating unit with whom we had been working was to be taken over by a new investigating unit which included former security branch members. The Joint Forum responded by sending a letter to the Commissioner of Police in Pretoria (with copies to the Peace Secretariat and Regional Commissioner) registering our objections to the composition of this new unit and our reservations about being able to co-operate with it.

In spite of follow-up telephone calls and faxes we have yet to receive a response, with the result that investigations into the Khayelitsha violence and the role of the police, have ground to a halt. We have appealed to the Peace Secretariat to take up the issue.

The Joint Forum will continue to meet on a fortnightly basis and keep the following objectives on centre stage.

Long term objective: to have committed, effective and accountable policing.

Interim objectives: (1) expose the role of the police in the violence and see that justice is done; (2) to improve the basis on which police investigate allegations of police involvement in the violence; and (3) to seek tangible evidence that the police are eradicating misconduct in their ranks.

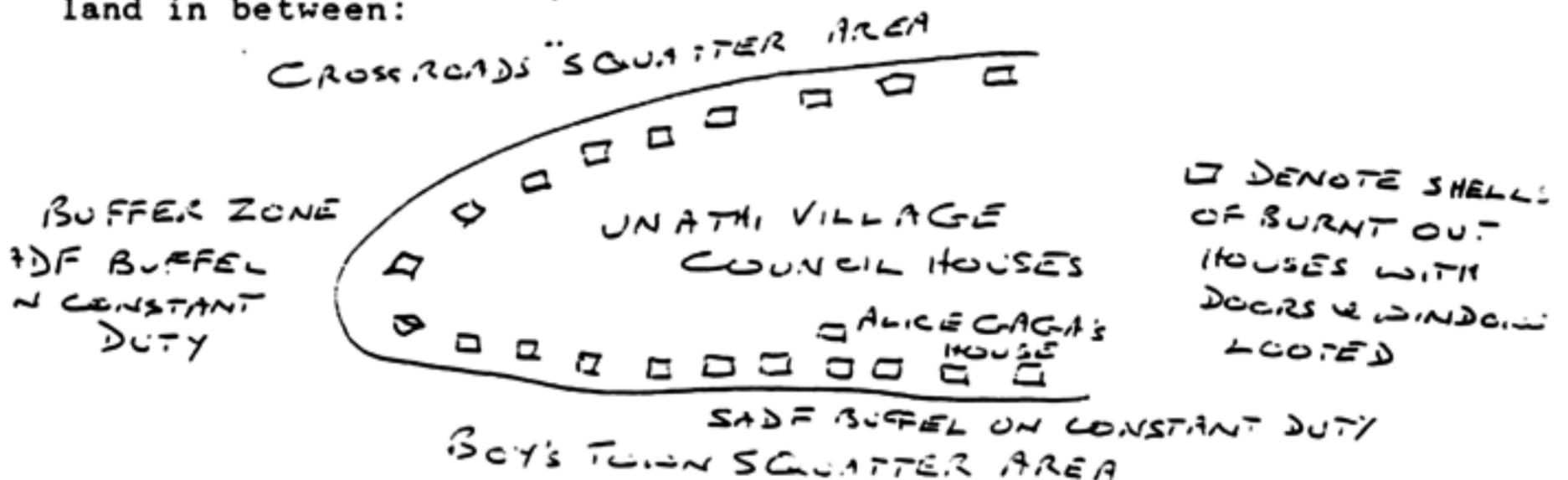
1.7 Sash's Urban Involvement

Our activities apart from attending the above meeting have ranged from court monitoring in Cape Town and up-country; group statement taking on behalf of UMAC in Khayelitsha KTC and in individual cases elsewhere; attending community meetings marches and church services when invited as well as monitoring situations of conflict notable of which are the following:

1.7.1 The UNATHI/Crossroads 'youth' conflict

We heard about the ongoing conflict involving the youth of the Crossroads squatter community and Unathi Village Community from Albert and David who live in nearby Nyanga and Stef Snel of UMAC at the first Resource Forum meetings. But we were brought face to face with this situation in mid-August when five women from the Unathi area of Crossroads came to the Sash Advice Office asking for help and advice. On hearing their story, Noma Nabe, called Rosalind Bush and I in and we listened to them with Noma Nabe and David Viti interpreting.

The women live in the new council houses allocated to them by the Town Clerk of the area in February 1990 when they moved from the Crossroads squatters camp for the most part. The allocation of these houses is a bone of contention with the other Crossroads squatter area shack dwellers and, in particular, their headman Geoffrey Ngonwe, who is also the ANC chairperson for that area. The women were extremely distressed and anxious about the violence being experienced with shootings and house burning on the periphery of their area which is bounded by the Crossroads shack-dwellers on one side and the Boy's Town squatter area on the other with their new two-roomed council houses built on the tongue of land in between:



I have photographs of the area and the houses on the periphery that are kept in the Regional Office.

The women were convinced that Geoffrey Ngonwe's henchmen were responsible for the shootings and burnings and that the police were doing nothing to control the situation. They were apparently unaware of the efforts being made at the time by the ANC Peace Commission to bring the two communities together and bring peace to the area despite the fact that the nephew of one of them as an ANC Youth representative was a key spokesperson in these negotiations. The women complained that their menfolk kept them in the

dark about what was going on and they seemed to know little about the alleged youth involvement. They knew some ANC youth were being housed in their area having defected from Ngonwe's authoritarian regime in Crossroads, and that they seemed to be negotiating with the predominantly PAC youth as well as ANC youth in their area. This substantiated much of what we had heard at the Resource Forum. There were disturbing reports at the time that the Ngonwe youth were being armed from sources in KTC and the Unathi youth by the local council.

A fortnight later a further group of Unathi women lead by Maureen Harmse of the original group came to the Advice Office and asked to speak to Rosalind Bush and I again as they were increasingly frightened and angry after the murder of Gladys Gaqa, the sister of one of the group. She reported that she and members of her family had witnessed the shooting and recognised the alleged killer as a special police constable from the Boy's Town squatter area. She had made a statement to this effect to the local police who assured her the man would be arrested but he had been seen out on duty that very morning by her and her neighbours. She has had no report back from the police. She has subsequently made a statement to me with an ANC Peace Commissioner interpreting and this is a case we are still hoping to be able to follow up through the 'police investigating team' structure. All the other women, apart from Maureen and Alice Gaqa, have had their houses burned and have lost everything. They are lodging with relatives or friends and have received little or no welfare relief. Apart from taking one carload to CAFDA, who provided a blanket and food vouchers for them but have now closed their doors to others outside their immediate district, we have been unable to find other welfare organisations able to help. However, further representation to the ANC Peace Commission resulted in our driving several carloads of Unathi women to the ANC Offices where they met with the Commissioners at length, and Rosalind Bush and I were briefed on the meeting afterwards. Talking with Maureen Harmse on the way there and back, I learned that she had acted on our advice and had become more involved in the meetings held by their menfolk in order to try and put their, the womens case, before them and get a fair hearing. She was now taking an active part in meetings and was feeling more confident and that this meeting with the commissioners had further enhanced this. We subsequently heard in November that an ANC Womens League branch has been launched in Unathi, but one of their key members has been harrassed on several occasions by the police. I have taken a statement from her in affidavit form and had it signed by the Catholic priest in Nyanga, which is a procedure we are now adopting wherever possible.

Our contact with Unathi is ongoing and our telephone contact with Susan Conjwa there turns out to be the phone in David Mkhize's office at the Siseko Brick works at Nyanga so we have able to draw together a useful communication support system between Nyanga, Crossroads and Unathi Village.

1.7.2 The ANC Peace Commission

After the first visit from the Unathi women, Rosalind Bush, on the advice of the ANC Womens League approached the ANC Peace Commission who invited us to meet and discuss with them the Unathi situation, we met with Sindise Mfenyana, Simon Makana and Vincent Diba and heard their impressions, findings and plans for future negotiations. We were much reassured and impressed by their attitude, industry and intention which was to bring all sides to the negotiating table, the local civic and shack dwellers association, as well as both the youth and elders of PAC, ANC and AZAPO persuasion. This had been achieved with small groups and would lead, it was hoped, to the wider community. A mass Crossroads/Unathi Village community meeting was planned the following Sunday at the 'buffer' zone between Crossroads and Unathi which we were invited to attend.

Val Goldschmidt, Lu Harding and I arrived on the Sunday afternoon to find the meeting had started before midday but had been dispersed by the police. One of the shack-dwellers on the Crossroads side directed us to Ngonwe's shack where a meeting between the Peace Commissioners and local leaders from both communities was taking place. We heard from Simon Makana and Vincent Diba that as the second speaker began, a stone was thrown starting an incident and despite requests from Makana, the police and SADF personnel present, who appeared to be drunk, refused to intervene until it escalated further with stones thrown from both sides causing the police to disperse the crowd with teargas. Makana, a dignified, intelligent and balanced negotiator and conciliator was visibly shocked and angered by the security force's lack of timely intervention and spoke of this as visible evidence of their collusion in the promotion of violence which they had previously been hesitant to admit to despite the reports to this effect. They were also disappointed at the failure of the press to turn up despite ample warning for what was hoped would be a crucial community peace initiative.

A further community meeting was held a few weeks later in a hall at Unathi Village at which a good cross section of representatives from the civic and council, PAC and ANC youth and elders spoke but Ngonwe and his followers did not appear as promised. With the help of a PAC speaker and Diba interpreters, Scotty Morton, Ann Oglethorpe and I heard the gist of the speeches and input from the floor in which much anger and frustration was expressed blaming Ngonwe for the

violence and his lack of co-operation in the efforts to make peace. However, the peace process had begun which appears to have been very successful thanks to the ANC Peace Commission's intervention.

1.7.3 Khayelitsha

Whilst Rosalind and I were at the ANC offices in mid-August to meet the Peace Commission, we were approached by the ANC Womens League and invited to take part in a womens march against 'violence' in Khayelitsha planned as a result of the killing of ANC Official Thuku's family. Seven of us from Sash marched with our banner and two quartet members, Anne Hill and Carol Lamb, walked in front with other representatives of women's organisations, DP member of parliament, Jan van Eck and current ANC chairperson for the Western Cape, Alan Boesak. The ANC Women's League handed in a 'memorandum' at the Police Station containing statements from people who had experienced violence involving police action. Several of these statements had been taken by Lu Harding and I at the Khayelitsha Advice Office earlier in the month these were put into affidavit form by LEAP, and have subsequently been referred to continually in seeking a response from the police investigation team.

Early in September the taxi war violence escalated with two separate incidents involving the burning of shacks and taxis in sections OH and DM of Green Point, Khayelitsha. As a result of the second and more extensive devastation, Jan van Eck and UMAC called a Press Conference at very short notice, the morning after for which we were able to utilise the newly formed Peace Alliance network to alert concerned organisations while UMAC alerted the press to meet at the Catholic Welfare Bureau Offices in Khayelitsha. A further 'memorandum' of statements taken by UMAC from the victims of the earlier burnings suggesting police involvement was presented to the press, and further police involvement in the current violence was highlighted, after which we toured the devastated areas, a photographic record of which is in the regional office. A positive development out of this was the decision to transport victims of the current burning who were willing to give statements in the presence of the police to the Legal Resource Centre offices where affidavits would be taken by lawyers in the presence of the then current police investigating team. Several of us were involved in providing transport for this and birga thomas and Scotty Morton provided typing and computing skills. Much of this ties in with what Rosalind Bush has reported on the Joint Forum on policing. Rosalind has also given us an excellent resume of the 'taxi war' complexities in the January 1992 edition of the Sash magazine.

A further press conference was convened late in October by Sister Masala of SHAWCO at the Sosibenza Primary School in Khayelitsha where the homeless victims of the burnings in September are housed until they can re-build their shacks. They are without money, have minimal possessions, let alone hope and the response to the 'appeal' launched at the Press Conference has not been substantial although Sash members have responded generously. The press did not report on the accusations of alleged police involvement which each and every victim who spoke alluded to fearlessly. The Peace Alliance structures were solidly behind this initiative and Sash Regional Office has been a collection point for monetary and material donations and continues to be so as burnings are still taking place.

The focus of the violence moved to other areas and in September, Sandra Haydon, Paula Cardoso, Scotty Morton, Sue Collin and I took statements from victims at the old creche in KTC for UMAC and yet again the police's role was questioned.

Meanwhile a Peace Conference was held at the Civic Centre convened by the Mayor and Archbishop Tutu, bringing together Cape Town businessmen, representatives of concerned organisations, township political activists, civic and council representatives, leadership and members of the rival taxi factions, SABTA (South African Black Taxi Association), National and Regional members, and a contingent from the police. Jenny de Tolly headed a sizeable delegation from the Black Sash with Helen Zille directly involved in planning and administration and both she and Mary Burton chaired one of the three commissions we split into. They have been sitting on the special Peace Committee formed there that has been meeting regularly since and there have been subsequent emergency Peace Conference meetings called at which Sash has been represented.

1.7.4 The Nyanga Bus Terminus

The focus of the 'taxi war' violence moved to the Nyanga Bus Terminus area late in October. A Peace Alliance Inter-Faith service initiative at the Bus Terminus had to be shelved because of the volatile situation there, but a smaller Inter-Faith Prayer service on the lines of a Quaker Meeting was hosted by Ann Oglethorpe and Susan Conjwa at the Educare Centre, Nyanga, on 10 November at which representative leaders of the Muslim, Jewish and Christian Methodist, Anglican and Catholic faiths, as well as Sash and other concerned organisations were present. At a meeting after it was decided that the community and particularly IDAMASA should carry the initiative forward, which it happily did,

There followed a month long period of regular monitoring of the situation at the Bus Terminus by Sash members in

response to an emergency call, initially, from Helen Zille convening a Peace Alliance monitors meeting at the Holy Cross Church, Nyanga, because of the worsening situation of tension between the two rival taxi factions of Legunya taxi drivers backed by KTC and a large majority of the local Nyanga residents and WEBTA drivers who for the most part come into the township from elsewhere. Helen asked us to join her in assessing the situation on the spot with a walkabout at the Terminus, where it became apparent that the perceptions of the Webta drivers were that the proposed new City Council regulations were favouring Lagunya and not them. The atmosphere in the days ahead fluctuated from tense to very tense as we tried to monitor the police and, subsequently, SADF vehicle movements, their behaviour, and on one occasion experience their overreaction in teargassing us on the Lagunya side of the terminus. But in conjunction with UMAC and the occasional other monitors we dared to hope our presence may have had a damping down effect over all concerned. After a boycott of WEBTA taxis by the residents and an absence of WEBTA taxis from the terminus for a short period, the situation gradually improved as extensive lobbying continued behind the scenes. So much so, that on Sunday 8 December IDAMASA were able to hold a very successful prayer service in the Bus Terminus followed by a march through Nyanga, KTC, and the environs at which several of us were privileged to be present at the service and share in the joy and hope of the community gathered there. Since then over the Christmas period and into the New Year the situation there has remained peaceful. My special thanks to Penny Sachs, Veronique Schoeffel, Scotty Morton, Sandra Haydon, Val Goldschmidt and Rosalind Bush who helped me with this monitoring under rather uncertain conditions from which we learned much that is useful for monitoring similar events in the future.

1.8 Court Monitoring

1.8.1 Cape Town and its environs

Early in the year there were still many "illegal gathering" cases being remanded in the magistrates courts, and in Cape Town many of these involved the mothers and friends of the Ashley Forbes trialists who were imprisoned on Robben Island at the time. Many of the mothers I had met through the now disbanded Mitchells Plain Crisis Relief Centre and Advice Office workers there who were also implicated in these cases. Through the dedicated and relentless efforts of Taswell Papier, these and many other cases including up-country case were withdrawn during April but some not until June, of which Scotty Morton and her group who were arrested in Greenmarket Square for protesting against the detention of Shirley Gunn with her child was one. Rafael Martin, whose case Sash has monitored since his arrest in April

1990, and release on bail in June 1990, his bail conditions were lifted in March 1991 and his case was finally withdrawn in June 1991 under the indemnity clause thanks to Papier's persistence.

In August last year at Mitchells Plain, Mary Ngemtu's 15 year old son, Ndoda, appeared for the third time on a Public Violence charge which arose out of a school's boycott incident over the lack of books and desks in March 1991. At the time the police dispersed a group of children picketing outside the school and Ndoda was shot in the back and wrist as he ran. He was in Groote Schuur Hospital for ten days after an emergency operation and I was shown a long scar he had down the middle of his front as a result and buckshot still in his wrist. His case was withdrawn later in the month but his mother was bringing a civil case against the police which always carries the possibility of the accused's re-arrest when a case has been withdrawn rather than given a judgement. Mary Ngemtu is well known to Sash court monitors for her own political activism and imprisonment in the Worcester area from 1987 till April 1990.

We are currently monitoring the case of Mxolisi Petane, a highly respected member of the ANC Executive who was released from Robben Island earlier in 1991. He has been charged along with two others with "murder", "attempted murder" and three others charges in connection with the 'taxi war'. He was allowed bail earlier in November at R2000-00, on condition that he reported to Woodstock Police Station on Mondays and Fridays and that he did not visit the Lagunya Taxi rank at Khayelitsha Section C. His case is remanded until 14 February 1992.

1.8.2 Rural Court Monitoring

Our main focus on rural cases has been in two areas. The first of which was a case in Montagu involving Annemarie Hendrikz, the Cape Western fieldworker, Anne Schuster, a Sash member, Cheryl Carolus of the ANC executive and fourteen other women who were charged with contravening a municipal by-law when arrested for taking part in a march at Ashton in protest against police violence during disturbances in the area over the period of the lifting of the "separate amenities" legislation and its lack of implementation in rural areas. At a hearing in April 1991, attended by six Sash members from Cape Town and three from Somerset West, we heard the group plead "not guilty" but refuse further legal representation. Instead, Carolus read a statement from the dock, amidst a court-room packed to overflowing of comrades and an atmosphere of expectation that was contagious and after delays while the prosecutor tried to get the case withdrawn by the Attorney-General's office, then to have it moved to the Regional Court at Worcester, and finally proceeded with four police witnesses

identifying seven of the accused, three others unable to identify any, so ten were dismissed from the case. Carolus, Annemarie Hendrikz and five others were found 'not guilty' on the magistrate's return from lunch because the prosecutor had failed to make a case and there were various anomalies. We gained the impression that neither the magistrate nor the prosecutor wanted to be involved in the case and the atmosphere of leniency in the court room and outside was heartening as struggle songs and 'Nkosi sikele 'iAfrika were sung in the courtroom during the lunch break!

The second area of focus has been Villiersdorp, where Annemarie Hendrikz has built up strong ties with the local civic and Advice Office in the making, which she will expand on in her report. She drew us in as court monitors for four cases which arose out of pickets and demonstrations over the demolition of the existing squatter camp and the lack of housing and for so-called coloured and black inhabitants of Villiersdorp and workers from surrounding towns and local industry. Two of these cases involved Thomas Jansen, an indefatigable ANC activist who has been instrumental in the formation of the local civics, in one case with fifty five others who were charged with "trespass", of whom charges were dropped against all but twelve. Jansen was separately charged with "assault" and "resisting arrest", and later found 'not guilty'. One other was charged with "incitement" and "intimidation", and five others with "public violence". Charges were withdrawn eventually on the "trespass" case and the "public violence" case heard in Caledon resulted in suspended sentences.

Subsequently, later in November, Sandra Haydon, who has taken particular interest in the community, went up to monitor a community march for which it appears magisterial permission was given but there seems to have been confusion on the municipality's position resulting in the police deciding it was an "illegal gathering" and arresting Sandra and forty seven others; Jansen is charged with 'resisting arrest' again; and another with damage to a police vehicle. Three of us went up to support Sandra and the community on 28 January 1992 and the cases have been remanded until 7 April when the cases will probably run so we will go up there in force!

2. Political Imprisonment

2.1 Cowley House Liaison Committee

Continuing from 1990, this committee met weekly to discuss preparations for the release of political prisoners from Robben Island and prisons in the Western Cape. I gradually took over from Lois Harley in representing the Black Sash there and in keeping an eye on the deep freezes at Cowley

House. As always Black Sash members responded splendidly to requests for refills. The liaison committee persevered with their call for pre-release counselling but to no avail. Releases continued to be as indeterminate and random but preparations to welcome home releasees were rewarded on 16 April when forty-one were released from Robben Island. Candy Malherbe and I joined many others at the dockside and afterwards at the Press Conference outside Cowley House to share in the joy of their home-coming. Amongst them were some of the Ashley Forbes trialists whose parents and friends had campaigned so defiantly for their release. It was heartening to see Peter Jacobs and other attend the final appearance and withdrawal of their parents' cases in the Cape Town Magistrates Court. Our hearts bled as we watched Mrs Forbes attend each new welcome home party to greet others of her son's fellow trialists until the day came that Ashley was amongst them and his mother's case was being withdrawn in court. His mother was not in court that day!

After the initial large group releases gained in momentum but often at less than a day's notice, and the committee meetings dwindled to a halt as we greeted other releasees at the dockside; protested the inconsistency of the releases; joined the home-comers in services of thanksgiving in the courtyard of Cowley House; attended a NAMDA Press Conference at UCT Medical School and heard of the growing concern for the hunger striking prisoners whose condition was critical; and the next evening showed our concern and solidarity with a vigil outside Somerset Hospital under the window of the hunger strikers ward where we heard them reciprocate with our 'amdalas'.

2.2 Cowley House Welcome Home for Political Prisoners

All the while, the staff at Cowley House remained patient, cheerful, warm and sympathetic throughout. They gave the releasees and their families a wonderful welcome, saw to their travel arrangements, made arrangements for their medical checks, and counselling if requested, took them shopping and co-ordinated their entertainment with the many friends of Cowley House. Overseas Funding stopped in June so financing the remaining releasees became a problem but they managed to sort it out somehow. We salute their wonderful contribution over the years and their amazing ability to cope under very difficult conditions during the last year of their existence.

2.3 The winding up of Cowley House

On 11 October 1991 a nostalgic farewell party was held for Cowley House in the courtyard there after a service of thanksgiving in the church next door. Raymond Mhlaba spoke on behalf of Nelson Mandela and June Mlangeni on behalf of

the many, many relatives who had stayed at Cowley House over the years, board members and others who have delighted in its existence spoke of the early years and Mary Burton spoke on behalf of the many Black Sash members who have associated with Cowley House since its vision and inception through Moira Henderson. Mary also introduced the stunning photographic exhibition put together by Penny Sachs in recognition of those who suffered for so many years on Robben Island. A reminder too for the Black Sash members who went across latterly to visit new found friends over there before those that remained were moved to Pollsmoor. Penny Sachs will report on the political prisoners that remained in Pollsmoor (2.4), who she, in particular, helped by others did so much for.

2.4 Remaining Political Prisoners in Pollsmoor - separate report by Penny Sachs - tabled.

3. Protest Action and Stands

The many occasions that Sash monitors and members took part in protest actions, stands and marches particularly in sympathy with the tardy release of political prisoners, those on hunger strike, and the ongoing violence in black townships will be covered by Val Goldschmidt's report and the quartet's Regional Council report.

4. Squatter Issues - Paula Cardoza's report on her involvement with squatter issues over the past year is to be tabled separately.

5. Somerset West Court and Repression Monitoring Report - tabled separately

6. Conclusion

The proposed closer link between the Advice Office and Regional Council, particularly in the context of repression monitoring has come at just the right moment as there is a dire need for a central co-ordinator and organiser for the monitoring group in the Advice Office and working in conjunction with the Advice Office staff. The prospect of a Black Sash member employed on a half-day basis to do this is exciting for future progress and development in tandem with the organisational forums that are underway.

The year has been a sobering and yet rewarding one in preparing the way for an increasingly effective monitoring team thanks to the incredible support from Rosalind Bush, Jenny de Tolly and others of the Executive, the quartet and

Regional Council monitors, Val Goldschmidt, Sandra Haydon, Penny Sachs and birga thomas. We were sad to lose the services of Val Rose-Christie and Janet Sandell. We wish them well. Betty Davenport and Annemarie Hendrikz, in their Advice Office hats, branch chairs such as Jean Goode and Biddy Greene, and particularly, from the membership Paula Cardosa, Lu Harding, Scotty Morton and Veronique Schoeffel whose contribution has gone beyond the call of duty. I salute and thank them all most sincerely and dare hope we can inspire more of the membership to join both our active and non-active ranks. More help is going to be desperately needed as we are called on to feed into a wider Independant Monitoring Group coming out of the Peace Alliance Structures.

Finally, my sincere thanks to Judy Woodward for constantly cheerful response to our needs, not the least of which has been the computerising of this report.

Anne Greenwell
February 1992
Repression Monitoring Portfolio