Before the Fourth World Conference on Women

The Black Sash of South Africa, 1955–1995

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In 1995, the Black Sash of South Africa celebrated its 40th anniversary. Originally established in 1955 as the Women's Defence of the Constitution League, this organisation would, over the next decades, commit itself to many of the Critical Areas of Concern later adopted in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and a Platform for Action.[1] Long before the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995, the Black Sash became increasingly committed to condemning the human rights abuses of South Africa's apartheid regime. Its members also actively addressed questions relating to poverty, education, healthcare, violence against women, armed conflict, economic inequality, and women's human rights.

This research embraces an historical approach that is further informed by methodological perspectives from feminist and critical race theory. Its evidence has been gathered from primary sources in the Black Sash collections at the Alan Paton Centre at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, and the University of Cape Town in the Western Cape. Oral history interviews have also been undertaken with Mary Burton, a President of the Cape Western Black Sash and a later Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner, as well as Mary Kleinenberg and Alleyn Diesel of the Natal Midlands Black Sash; however, these do not feature in this short excerpt.

Across the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, a dedication to human rights as well as women's rights existed at the centre of the Black Sash's anti-apartheid agenda – although not in so many words. This paper will begin to contextualise the organisation's emergence and ethos in terms of recent historiography about the transnational history of women's rights as human rights prior to the Fourth World Conference on Women. It charts a transformation in the Black Sash, from human rights to a tentative feminism which was grounded in the realisation of women's human rights. Yet in the context of the anti-apartheid movement's emphasis on non-racialism, the Black Sash was constrained by the reality of its majority white membership. A focus on the Black Sash of South Africa demonstrates that is important to consider the efforts of the women's organisations that were committed to the ethos that emerged from the Fourth World Conference on Women in the decades before these imperatives gained greater significance on the global stage.

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The Transnational History of Human Rights and Women's Rights

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights brought the concept to the forefront of global humanitarian discussion in the immediate post-World War II era. However, it was only during the 1990s that the phrase "women's rights are human rights" gained transnational significance. The phrase has been widely attributed to First Lady Hillary Clinton, whose influential address at the 1995 Fourth Conference on Women asserted:

> If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, it is that human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights.[2]

Essentially, Clinton emphasised that women's rights could no longer be overlooked in an international human rights context. Often described as "a watershed moment for women's rights," this was a major departure from the long tradition in which "human rights" were conceived in largely gender-neutral term.[3] It was also a turning point in Clinton's public embrace of women's issues and feminism.[4] Two decades later, feminist activists would transform this important moment into a widely-circulated series of memes. Clinton's address – and the memes it inspired – became a significant element in her 2016 presidential campaign.[5]

However, while the phrase was certainly popularised by Clinton, it had emerged with increasing prominence at least a decade earlier amongst less well-known but nonetheless influential feminists. This included the Chilean jurist Cecilia Medina, who described "women's rights as human rights" in a 1985 chapter about women's rights in Latin America.[6] It appeared again, in November 1990, as the rationale for an influential article in *Human Rights Quarterly* by activist and scholar Charlotte Bunch, who recounted how an address by Filipino feminist coalition GABRIELA at a 1989 Amnesty International Regional Conference had inspired her to consider "women's rights are human rights" as a phrase.[7] This connection intensified in anticipation of the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, when "the international community for the very first time explicitly condemned human rights violations perpetrated against women," an "un precedented move [which] signaled a real shift in international consciousness."[8] Under the title "Women's Rights are Human Rights," anti-apartheid activist and scholar Gertrude Fester reported about this conference to the South African journal *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*.[9] Two years later, Hillary Clinton's use of the phrase in 1995 must be seen as the culmination of these global campaigns – most of which originated in the South – and perhaps even a recognition of their increasing global resonance and success.[10]

While the exact phrase "human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights" may not have emerged until the 1980s and 1990s, the connection has a far longer trajectory

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amongst Latin American feminists. Eleanor Roosevelt and the Latin American women who fought for "sex" to be included in Article 2 of the 1948 Declaration "intended that it would address the problem of women's subordination."[11] Katherine M. Marino describes how Latin American women were at the forefront of what amounted to a global human rights campaign as early as the 1930s and 1940s. These women did not argue for women's civil and political equality alone; they also demanded social rights, working women's rights, and reproductive rights. This *feminismo Americano* enabled Latin American women to lead a transnational, Pan-Hispanic feminist movement which paired women's rights claims with anti-imperialism, anti-fascism, and anti-state violence. These Latin American feminists described their approach as *feminism práctico* – a "practical feminism" which would demand equal rights under the law in addition to challenging "political, economic, and social oppression and violence." It was the broad social vision of these Latin American women, Marino argues, that made them push for women's rights to be more explicitly identified under the clause about "sex" as part of the 1948 Declaration.[12]

Historian Samuel Moyn describes 1948 as a particularly important "scene of struggle" for the development of human rights.[13] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights had emphasised that:

> All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

These excerpts demonstrate that the Declaration conceptualised of human rights in universalistic terms, yet used gendered language which described "man," "mankind," and "brotherhood" as representative of humankind.[14] This conceptualisation of the "human" had been rejected by women's rights reformers, suffragists, and feminists across a variety of traditions.[15] Some historians argue that Eleanor Roosevelt, whose efforts had been central to the Declaration's success, short-changed women insofar as she, too, conceived of human rights and "brotherhood" in gender-neutral terms – an approach that was common amongst the era's North American and European feminists – whereas others suggest that that Roosevelt astutely understood that women needed to be at the decision-making table to start with, and so had to make pragmatic decisions on other accounts.[16]

The result, however, was that women's rights were not explicitly guaranteed within the purview of human rights, in either the law or discourse. After 1948, it would take the UN's Commission on the Status of Women decades to "conceptualise the women's human rights agenda, develop measurable plans of action, and secure the international covenants necessary to … expand them to include women rights."[17] As Charlotte Bunch argued in 1990: "The narrow definition of human rights [as] recognized by many in the West as solely a matter of state violation of civil and

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political liberties, impedes consideration of women's rights." A "'second generation' or socioeconomic human rights to food, shelter, and work [needed to be] clearly delineated as part of the Universal Declaration," Bunch argued, to ensure that women's human rights could be addressed fully.[18] This is, in turn, why later women such as Medina, Bunch, and Clinton would have to emphasise women's rights as needing to be central to the realisation of human rights.

Questions not only existed about the Declaration's gendered language, but also about what even actually constituted human rights and who it encompassed. It had been Jan Christian Smuts, the former South African president who had advocated segregation and the continued disenfranchisement of the African majority, who had initially introduced the concept of "basic human rights" into the Preamble for the UN Charter.[19] British historian Mark Mazower finds these inconsistencies to be unsettling, noting the contradictions between Smuts' own colonialist and segregationist policies and his lofty contributions to the UN Charter's Preamble.[20] South African historian Saul Dubow observes that Smuts called for "basic," rather than "fundamental," human rights – a distinction with significant implications. Basic human rights might include life and security alone, rather than the more fundamental human rights of equality.[21] South African legal scholar Willem H. Gravett makes sense of this contradiction by emphasising that, for Smuts, "human rights were emphatically not synonymous with political, social or racial equality." From this perspective, Smuts' central contribution to the UN Charter was to make a connection between human rights and postwar peace. From this perspective, the purview of the Declaration was initially far more limited than the far broader ethos that later became attributed to human rights as a concept. [22]

This was the transnational and historical context in which the Women's Defence of the Constitution League emerged seven years later.

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From the Women's Defence of the Constitution League to the Black Sash

In May 1955, a small group of six women came together to galvanise support in response to the proposed Senate Bill, which aimed to remove the small number of existing "Cape Coloured" male voters from the Cape Province voters' role. The South African Constitution of 1910 had required a two-thirds parliamentary majority in both the House of Assembly and the Senate to achieve such a change. When the Afrikaner-dominated National Party failed to reach this majority, it proposed to enlarge the Senate so as to increase its own representation. The Senate Act of 1955 would ensure a National Party voting bloc, thus undermining constitutional safeguards. The Women's Defence of the Constitution League was established by women who were deeply disturbed by this approach. Through a phone campaign and petitions, followed by street marches, overnight vigils in front of the

Union Buildings, the silent "haunting" of politicians, and a convoy of cars between Johannesburg and Cape Town, the League significant media coverage and mobilised a record number of women against the government. It defined itself by the sashes worn by its members, who mournfully draped a black sash over South Africa's Constitution.[23] As journalist Mirabel Rogers explained in 1956, many South Africans "who had been apathetic towards events not infringing upon their own liberties, suddenly awoke to a new consciousness of their equivocal position."[24]

The League soon reinvented itself as the Black Sash. Across only a few years, it would become a far more dynamic and liberal organisation than the League had been. This shift, however, would engender a considerable downturn in membership. Initially, the League had inspired considerable participation amongst up to 10,000 women; yet by 1959, the Black Sash had dwindled to between 1,200 and 2,000 nationwide, with fairly stable membership across subsequent decades.[25] As historian Cheryll Walker emphasises: "The sight of white, middle class women – well-dressed, well-spoken, well-behaved – demonstrating against the government outraged many of its supporters. Frequently the women were exposed to verbal abuse and threats of violence. Not only were they defying the government, they were also defying a set of unwritten rules about what was seemly and proper conduct for women."[26]

Part of the League's initial popularity was because it had emerged a racially exclusive organisation intended to mobilise women *as voters*. Although members of the League participated in the multiracial Women's March on Pretoria in August 1956, its membership was limited to white women because only white South African women were enfranchised citizens.[27] This represented a relatively new consciousness insofar as South Africa had only enfranchised white women 26 years earlier in 1930. Some of the older League members had themselves been suffragists.[28] "'We felt responsible,' said [Black Sash member] Noël Robb. 'We had the vote as white women, although we had not had it for so long, and people must listen to us, but if we filled our ranks with coloureds and blacks who had no vote, we would lose our strength.'"[29]

This early racial exclusivity correlates with observations that, historically, white women's organisations in South Africa did not concerned themselves with engaging women of colour as members.[30] It took years longer for the Black Sash to become open to women of colour, due to its persistent emphasis on prioritising the efforts of women voters – who were, as of the 1950s, exclusively white. It was not until 1963 that the membership of the Black Sash became open to "all women over the age of 18 who were South African citizens or permanent residents."[31] The lateness of this shift meant that, across the next decades, the Black Sash remained an organisation dominated by white women – in both practice and public image.[32]

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The Black Sash of South Africa and Human Rights

During the late 1950s, the Black Sash became aware that South Africa had not become a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[33] Soon after, it began to ever more persistently make sense of its non-violent resistance in terms of human rights advocacy. Inderpal Grewal has criticised an approach wherein women's rights are added to human rights internationalism because it overlooks the degree to which "linked hegemonic formations" derived from geopolitical, patriarchal, and local forces influence women's lives.[34] This conceptual limitation has some relevance for the Black Sash and its approach as a case study. However, the Black Sash's foundational connection between human rights and women's rights nonetheless remains significant and noteworthy.

This embrace of human rights took place against the backdrop of African nationalists periodically invoking human rights to highlight western hypocrisy in the twilight of colonial rule. The language of nationalism and revolution was admittedly far more important to most anti-colonial leaders and intellectuals; however, human rights did sometimes emerge as what Andreas Eckert describes as "an international legal instrument" in the context of international diplomacy. When Julius Nyerere mobilised human rights as a blueprint for the new Tanzania, for example, he did not prioritise this over what were believed to be the more pressing concerns of national development and the eradication of poverty. In contrast, the ANC Freedom Charter of 1955 emphasised social and legal as well as political rights to emerge as "a program of human rights."[35] Over the next decades, it became common for both a national and transnational anti-apartheid ethos to be conceptualised in terms of human rights advocacy.

What was different and distinctive about the Black Sash was the degree to which its increasing focus on human rights violations were grounded in advocacy for women's rights, specifically the equal rights of African women.[36] Across the 1960s and 1970s, the Black Sash began to focus on the apartheid regime's human rights abuses. It developed a variety of initiatives, including the Advice Offices which operated across most major cities. The Advice Offices were staffed by Black Sash volunteers, employed women as translators and caseworkers, and facilitated a bail fund.[37] Members were committed to educating themselves about legislation and "maintained an interest in all violations of civil, political, social and human rights," especially the Group Areas Act, educational and workplace discrimination, healthcare, child care, forced removal, women's oppression, and political repression.[38] Its character as a women-only organisation oriented its members towards a recognition of how apartheid affected Black African women. The interpersonal dynamics at the Advice Offices meant that the Black Sash became acutely aware of the differing ways in which apartheid-era legislation affected women and men, as well as the degree to which specific abrogations of women's rights were often grounded in laws relating to marriage.

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Spearheaded by members from the Cape Western region chapter, the Black Sash officially adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1960.[39] The organisation then began in earnest to prioritise human rights as a discourse of protest. Two years after the 1948 Declaration, the UN General Assembly had declared December 10 to be International Human Rights Day in order to draw attention to the Declaration itself. The Black Sash's adoption of the Declaration in 1960 thus coincided with the tenth anniversary of Human Rights Day. Broadly speaking, its activities after 1960 can be interpreted in terms of what Thomas Oleson describes as "rights solidarity." This is "a form of solidarity concerned with human rights abuses and other forms of human oppression that is a result of the actions of states or extra-legal forces. Rights solidarity work generally aims at putting pressure on human rights abusers." This might occur through direct lobbying of governments or pressure through governments and intergovernmental organisations that are "expected to have a certain influence on the state in which the violations occur."[40] The Black Sash engaged in rights solidarity because it aimed to pressure the South African government on account of its violation of human rights norms.

This was the context in which the Black Sash operated from within South Africa. Its members were not advocating on behalf of themselves, but on behalf of others. The organisation's aims and objectives also emphasised the primacy of human rights:

> THE BLACK SASH is non-party political and undenominational, and, by non-violent and peaceful means, strives for the following objectives:
>
> 1. To conduct propaganda and enlist support and aid for the observance of political morality and the principles of parliamentary democracy within the Republic of South Africa.
> 2. To secure the recognition and the protection by law of Human Rights and Liberties.
> 3. The political education and enlightenment of citizens of South Africa, and other persons.
> 4. The doing of all such things and the carrying out of all such activities as may further the objects of the organization.[41]

Following this early emphasis on human rights, the Black Sash constantly returned to discussions of women's rights and equal rights in its magazine and newsletters, its placards, and its organising around Human Rights Day. The latter emerges as noteworthy as well as somewhat unusual on a global scale, because Charlotte Bunch suggests that "Human Rights Day programs on 10 December seldom include[d] discussion of issues like violence against women or reproductive rights."[42]

During the 1960s and early 1970s, the Black Sash Cape Western Region's newsletters reveal ongoing engagement with Human Rights Day. As early as 1962, the Black Sash held a demonstration stand featuring "about 40 posters setting forth the human rights that Western Democracy supports,

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such as the right to work, to freedom of speech, association, family life and many others."[43] In conjunction with the Civil Rights League, the National Council of Women, and the United Nations Association, the Black Sash organised for the Afrikaans anti-apartheid theologian Dr Albert Geyser to give an address, entitled "The Quality of Equality," the following year.[44] In 1966, the Cape Western Region prepared a list of those banned and listed by the apartheid government in the hope that it would appear in the *Cape Times* in conjunction with Human Rights Day. This did not occur, so it instead published this list in its *Sash* magazine.[45] Greater success occurred in following years, when the *Cape Times* did publish the Black Sash's letters in anticipation of Human Rights Day. Becoming ever more proactive, the Black Sash held a press conference with the *Argus*, the *Cape Times*, and the *Cape Herald* in anticipation of Human Rights Day in 1974.[46]

These initiatives continued across the 1980s, with the Cape Western Region becoming particularly committed to setting up stalls and protests for Human Rights Day.[47] In 1988, the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 33rd anniversary of the Black Sash coincided. Its current president Mary Burton was invited to participate in an "international focus" for the US-based Human Rights Watch, travelling to New York for the Declaration's 40th anniversary celebrations.[48] The Western Cape Region also developed The Campaign for Human Rights Now. This constituted "a series of press articles, a letter-writing campaign, an … poster depicting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," as well as a public meeting and what was described as a "Black Sash Human Rights sticker."[49] A petition also circulated, which read:

> Although the South African government refused to sign, we the South African people pledge our support for the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. We Hope it will be enshrined in the Bill of Rights of a future South Africa.[50]

On the 45th anniversary of the Universal Declaration in 1993, the Black Sash held a stand on the steps of St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town.[51]

In the twilight of the apartheid regime, the Black Sash's commitment to human rights, women's rights, and equal rights was both debated – and even expanded. In February 1990, Nelson Mandela saluted the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party, the United Democratic Front, and various other resistance organisations including the Black Sash, which he described as "the conscience of white South Africa."[52] Following Mandela's election in 1994, the Black Sash began to reinvent itself. Rather than continuing on as a membership-based volunteer organisation seeking to hold the government accountable, it became a social justice advocacy NGO in the wake of the 1996 constitution.

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Today, the organisation is now called Black Sash: Making Human Rights Real. Upon its 50th anniversary in 2005, National Director Marcella Naidoo reflected on the its rich history and legacy. In the *Black Sash: Making Human Rights Real: The Golden Jubilee Report, 1955-2005*, Naidoo described how the earliest members of the organisation had "used the relative safety of their privileged racial classification to speak out against the erosion of human rights" in South Africa.[53] Human rights have thus emerged as even more central to its vision – as well as to the memory the organisation created of itself.[54]

Provisional Conclusions

The Black Sash of South Africa offers an important case study for the connections between women's rights and human rights, both from a historical perspective and for contemporary and future women's rights research and activism. Its organisational ethos was that of a women's non-violent resistance organisation dedicated to the realisation of women's rights through explicit claims towards human rights. Although its members sometimes debated these questions, the actions of the organisation as well as individual members often spoke for themselves. Decades before Hillary Clinton, Charlotte Bunch, or Cecilia Medina asserted that "women's rights are human rights," the Black Sash was promoting these principles and ideals in the same breath, though not always in so many words. Although the Black Sash effectively transformed from a membership organisation to an NGO in the wake of 1994, its current advocacy during COVID-19 offers the opportunity to consider its ongoing commitment to women's human rights.

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[1] "Beijing Declaration and a Platform for Action: The Fourth World Conference on Women," *United Nations*, 1995, https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf.
[2] Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Women's Rights Are Human Rights: Excerpts, Remarks, 5 September 1995," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 1/2 (1996): 99-100.
[3] Erin Delmore, "Hillary's Beijing speech: a watershed moment for women's rights," *MSNBC*, 2 February 2013, http://www.msnbc.com/andrea-mitchell/hillarys-beijing-speech-watershed-moment.
[4] Valerie M. Hudson and Patricia Leidl, *The Hillary Doctrine: Sex and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 7-20.
[5] Sharon Crozier-De Rosa and Vera Mackie, *Remembering Women's Activism* (Oxon: Routledge, 2019), 210.
[6] Cecilia Medina, "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Latin American Countries and the Organization of American States (OAS)," in *Women, Feminist Identity, and Society in the 1980s: Selected Papers*, eds. Myriam Díaz-Diocaretz and Iris M. Zavala (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 1985).
[7] Charlotte Bunch, "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Toward a Re-Vision of Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 12 (1990): 486-498. The address was by Ninotchoka Rosca of GABRIELA.
[8] Hudson and Leidl, *The Hillary Doctrine*, 14-15.
[9] Gertrude Fester, "Women's Rights Are Human Rights," *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 10, no. 20 (1994): 76-79.
[10] Allida Black, "Are Women 'Human': The Un and the Struggle to Recognize Women's Rights as Human Rights," in *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History*, eds. Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde and William I. Hitchcock (Oxford:

Oxford University Press, 2012), 148-151; Crozier-De Rosa and Mackie, *Remembering Women's Activism*, 206-206 and 2010. For another analysis of this geneaology, see: Elisabeth Friedman, "Women's Human Rights: The Emergence of a Movement," in *Women's Rights, Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives*, eds. Julie Peters and Andrea Wolper (New York: Routledge, 1995). These campaigns had themselves been the product of the popular human rights consciousness which emerged in western democracies during the 1970s, fostered by mass organisations such as Amnesty International, see: Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2010).
[11] Bunch, "Women's Rights as Human Rights," 487.
[12] Katherine Marino, *Feminism for the Americas: The Making of an International Human Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).
[13] Samuel Moyn, "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 in the History of Cosmopolitanism," *Critical Inquiry* 40, no. 4 (2014): 365-366.
[14] "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," *United Nations*, 1948, https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/.
[15] Arvonne S. Fraser, "Becoming Human: The Origins and Development of Women's Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (1999): 853-906; Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Human Rights Discourse in Women's Rights Conventions in the United States, 1848-70," in *Revisiting the Origins of Human Rights*, eds. Pamela Slotte and Miia Halme-Tuomisaari (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
[16] Johannes Morsink, "Women's Rights in the Universal Declaration," *Human Rights Quarterly* 13 (1991): 229-256; Black, "Are Women 'Human'," 135-136.
[17] Black, "Are Women 'Human'," 134.
[18] Bunch, "Women's Rights as Human Rights," 488.
[19] Preamble, Charter of the United Nations, 1948, *United Nations: Shaping Our Future Together*, 2020, https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/preamble/.
[20] Mark M. Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), Chapter 1.
[21] Saul Dubow, "Smuts, the United Nations and the Rhetoric of Race and Rights," *Journal of Contemporary History* 43, no. 1 (2008): 45-74.
[22] Willem H. Gravett, "The Smutsian Concept of 'Human Rights'," *South African Journal on Human Rights* 32, no. 3 (2016): 538-55.
[23] See: Cherry Michelman, *The Black Sash of South Africa: A Case Study in Liberalism* (London: Oxford University Press and the Institute of Race Relations, 1975), Chapter 2; Kathryn Spink, *Black Sash: The Beginning of a Bridge in South Africa* (London: Methuen, 1991), Chapter 2; Mary Burton, "The Black Sash Story: Protest and Service Recorded in the Archives," *English Academy Review* 27, no. 2 (2010): 129-133.
[24] Mirabel Rogers, *The Black Sash: South Africa's Fight for Democracy* (Johannesburg: Rotonews [Pty.] Ltd., 1956), 6.
[25] Michelman, *The Black Sash*, 192; Spink, *Black Sash*, 38; Mary Ingouville Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice and Peace* (Auckland Park: Jacana, 2015), 28-35.
[26] Cheryll Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1991), 174.
[27] Spink, *Black Sash*, 54-55.
[28] Rogers, *The Black Sash*.
[29] Spink, *Black Sash*, 58.
[30] Hilda Bernstein, *For Their Triumphs and for Their Tears: Women in Apartheid South Africa* (International Defence and Aid Fund, 1975); Fidela Fouche, "Overcoming the Sisterhood Myth," *Transformation* 23 (1994): 79-95.
[31] Burton, *The Black Sash*, 28 and 24; Spink, *Black Sash*, 58.
[32] Mary Burton laments the organisation's early racial exclusivity and conservatism. However, she emphasises that, should the Black Sash taken a more radical stance from its inception, it might have been banned or restricted, as was Federation of South African Women and many of its leaders by 1962. Thus, Burton concludes that "an opportunity would have been lost to mobilise the group of women who gradually learned to find ways of opposing apartheid." Burton, *The Black Sash*, 28-35, esp. 33.
[33] Spink, *Black Sash*, 57.
[34] Inderpal Grewal, "'Women's Rights as Human Rights': Feminist Practices, Global Feminism, and Human Rights Regimes in Transnationality," *Citizenship Studies* 3, no. 3 (1999): 348.
[35] Andreas Eckert, "African Nationalists and Human Rights, 1940s-1970s," in *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, esp. 285 and 296. See also: Bonny Ibhawoh, *Imperialism and Human Rights: Colonial Discourses of Rights and Liberties in African History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). For the ANC Freedom Charter, see: Kader Asmal, David Chidester, and Cass Lubisi, eds. *Legacy of Freedom: The ANC's Human Rights Tradition: Africans' Claims in South Africa, the Freedom Charter, the Women's Charter, and Other Human Rights Landmarks of the African National Congress* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2005).
[36] Greater attention has been accorded the Black Sash's dedication to women's rights, see: Denise M. Ackermann, "Reproductive Rights and the Politics of Transition in South Africa," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 11, no. 2 (1995): 123-125; Jacklyn Cock, "'Another mother for peace': Women and peace building in South Africa, 1983-2003," in *Women in South African History: Basus'iimbokodo, Bawel'imilambo/They Remove Boulders and Cross Rivers*, ed. Nomboniso Gasa (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2007), 269-271; Meghan Healy-Clancy, "The Family Politics of the

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Federation of South African Women: A History of Public Motherhood in Women's Antiracist Activism," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 42, no. 4 (2017): 843-866.
[37] Spink, *Black Sash*, 64-67.
[38] See: Burton, "The Black Sash Story," 130-131.
[39] Michelman, *The Black Sash*, 69-70.
[40] Thomas Olesen, "Globalising the Zapatistas: From Third World Solidarity to Global Solidarity?" *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2004): 257.
[41] "Aims and Objects of the Black Sash," *Black Sash News*, 6, no. 4 (December 1962), *South African History Online*, https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/aims-and-objects-black-sash.
[42] Bunch, "Women's Rights as Human Rights," 488.
[43] "Cape Western Region Black Sash News Letter [sic]," No. 20, February 1963 (D2: Newsletters, 1956-1977 [incomplete], BC 668 Black Sash Archive [Cape Western Region], UCT Special Collections, University of Cape Town).
[44] "Cape Western Region Black Sash News Letter [sic]," *Black Sash News* 7, no. 4 (December 1963/February 1964) / No. 23, March 1964 (D2: Newsletters, 1956-1977).
[45] "Cape Western Region Black Sash Newsletter," No. 33, January 1967 (D2: Newsletters, 1956-1977).
[46] "Black Sash Cape Western Region: Newsletter October 1974 to March 1975," No. 60 (D2: Newsletters, 1956-1977).
[47] During the late 1970s, the format of the Cape Western Region newsletter changed. Hereafter, any updates about Human Rights Day events and media went largely unreported until the early 1980s.
[48] "Human Rights," *sash lines* no. 9, October 1988 (D2: Newsletter, 1986-1987). Burton was well aware of the human rights infringements of the apartheid government, including "detentions, curbs on the press… [sic]." Mary Burton, letter to Black Sash membership, June 25, 1988, October 1988 (D2: Newsletters, 1988, BC 668 Black Sash Archive [Cape Western Region], UCT Special Collections, University of Cape Town).
[49] "Campaign for Human Rights," *sash lines* no. 10, November 1988 (D2: Newsletter, 1986-1987).
[50] Black Sash Petition (n.d., c. 1988) (D2: Newsletters, 1988).
[51] "The Black Sash: Cape Western Region," December 1993 (D2: Newsletters, 1993-1995, BC 668 Black Sash Archive [Cape Western Region], UCT Special Collections, University of Cape Town).
[52] "Nelson Mandela's address in Cape Town on his release from Prison," 11 February 1990, *Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, 16 July 1918–5 December 2013*, http://www.mandela.gov.za/mandela_speeches/1990/900211_release.htm.
[53] Marcella Naidoo, "The Black Sash Now and in the Future: The National Director," *Black Sash: Making Human Rights Real: The Golden Jubilee Report, 1955-2005* (Cape Town: The Black Sash, 2005), 13 and 14, https://www.blacksash.org.za/docs/Golden_Jubilee_2005_Annual_Report.pdf.
[54] "About the Black Sash," *Black Sash: Making Human Rights Real*, 2017, https://www.blacksash.org.za/index.php/about-us/about-the-black-sash.

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