Beyond borders: A Transnational History of the Black Sash and FEDSAW, c. 1952 – 62

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by

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Abstract

The multiracial Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and the exclusively white Black Sash represented South African women fighting against apartheid in the 1950s and ‘60s. Despite being two well-known female organisations in anti-apartheid activism, this is the first piece of research where they have been studied and analysed from a transnational perspective.

This thesis argues transnationalism was fundamental for both organisations’ growth and development in the 1950s and ‘60s. The term has been interpreted and defined as the movement of ideas and knowledge that transcends physical boundaries, which created opportunities that encouraged South African women to take part in global events and tours, sharing experiences and gaining support from international audiences and organisations.

Importantly, transnationalism enabled FEDSAW and the Black Sash to further develop their ideological stance as independent women’s organisations in a racially and politically divided South Africa. Additionally, transnationalism helped to re-instate the organisations’ aims and further embedded them in anti-apartheid activism, thereby positioning South African women alongside their male counterparts in fighting for racial equality and cementing them in the wider national liberation movement. The transnational framework also links the Federation and the Black Sash to South Africa’s earlier women’s movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, demonstrating that South African women were more politically active and motivated than previously thought.

Through undertaking a transnational framework, light is shed on South African women’s history during apartheid, and new insights on both organisations are uncovered, highlighting their contribution to anti-apartheid activism through transnationalism.

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Dedication

to

Elizabeth Davenport (d. 2018), Diana Davis (1921– 2017), and all the unnamed women who fought tirelessly against oppression and injustices in South Africa and all over the world.

Abbreviations

ACVV – Afrikaans Christelike Vroue Vereeniging- Afrikaans Christian Women's Society

ANC – African National Congress

ANCWL – African National Congress Women's League

ARM – African Resistance Movement

ASSF – Association Suisse pour le Suffrage Feminine

BDWSU – British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union

BDWCU – British Dominions Woman Citizenship Union

CATAPAW – Cape Association for the Abolition of Passes for South African Women

COD – Congress of Democrats

COPE – Congress of the People

CPSA- Communist Party of South Africa

DRC – Dutch Reformed Church

IAW – International Alliance of Women

ICW – International Council of Women

IDAMF – Inter-Denominational African Ministers' Federation

IWD – International Women's Day

IWSA – International Women's Suffrage Alliance

FCWU – Food and Canning Workers' Union

FEDSAW – Federation of South African Women

FRAC – Franchise Action Committee

MK – uMkhonto weSizwe

NCW – National Council of Women

NP – National Party

PAC- Pan Africanist Congress

SABRA – South African Bureau for Racial Affairs

SADF – South African Defence Force

SACP – South African Communist Party

SACPO – South African Coloured People's Organisation

SAIC – South African Indian Congress

SAIRR – South African Institute for Race Relations

SANNC – South African Native National Congress

SAP – South African Party

SAPC – South African Peace Council

SAVF – Suid Afrikanse Vrouwe Federasie

UDHR- Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN – United Nations

UP – United Party

VZB – Vrouwen Zending Bond

WCTU – Women's Christian Temperance Union

WEAU – Women's Enfranchisement Association for the Union

WEL – Women's Enfranchisement League

WIDF – Women's International Democratic Federation

WLF – Women's Liberal Federation

WNP – Women's National Party

WPC – World Peace Council

WSPU – Women's Social and Political Union

WWCTU – World Women's Christian Temperance Union

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Introduction

The multiracial Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and exclusively white Black Sash were the two dominant South African women's organisations created in the 1950s, which aimed at achieving basic human rights and political equality for all South Africans through fighting against apartheid. FEDSAW and the Black Sash were specifically chosen for this thesis because they were the two largest and prominent women's organisations fighting against apartheid during the same period in the mid-1950s. They were also both made up of women for women members only which in itself has led to debates about where both these women's organisations fit in relation to feminism and women's rights. Similarly, their political activity is also comparable as they were established a year within each other, and experienced an increased and decreased level of political activity at the same time, being the mid 1950s and early '60s.

The comparable element of this study emphasizes how South African women responded differently in fighting against apartheid. These organisations were also chosen due to their stark differences regarding racial representation, protest styles and aims. The Black Sash and FEDSAW's membership appealed to different races and their origins were focused on different socio-political issues and different apartheid legislation. The FEDSAW were a multiracial organisation which united women who were affiliated with other political organisations, and were mostly working class women; while the Black Sash were a white only women's organisation that represented the middle to upper class.

Additionally, their protesting styles and overall organisational aims differed. The Black Sash fought against the Senate Bill and their protesting style was silent and motionless, while the FEDSAW fought against the oppression of apartheid as part of the national liberation movement, with a protesting style that included song and dance. These organisations have been used as case studies to demonstrate that transnationalism was used to re-affirm their role in anti-apartheid activism and increase women's political stance in the national liberation movement.

Lastly, their organisational aims as political organisations also differed where the FEDSAW had eight distinctive aims that varied from fighting for justice for the individual to fighting for world peace, whereas the Black Sash's aim was to uphold

the 1910 South African constitution. Through comparing these two dominant political, women-only organisations, female representation in South Africa politics and their transnational presence can be further examined regardless of race and class.

Both organisations have been overlooked in South African history despite having played central roles in fighting alongside political organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and the South African Coloured People's Organisations (SACPO), in the liberation movement against apartheid in the 1950s and 60s. While they have been understudied, this thesis examines the Black Sash and FEDSAW are also more complex than previously thought, having had international links and wider networks, which influenced their development and role in the liberation movement. Transnationalism was significant to these organisations as it played an important role in shaping their ideological stance, clarified their organisations aims and therefore reinforced their roles in the national liberation movement.

Domestically, the 1950s and '60s was a significant period when the national liberation movement strengthened in the 1950s and weakened in the 1960s, consisting of several opposition political parties and organisations against the government and apartheid laws. The FEDSAW was integrated in the liberation movement when they were created and contributed to key documents that helped further its aims and clarify its ideological stance. The Federation aligned with the Women's Charter and Freedom Charter, both of which aimed for a democratic country and equality for all South Africans; as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was supported by the FEDSAW and Black Sash alike. While the 1950s and 1960s were politically hostile due to racial segregation, they also saw the emergence of women's political activism against the injustice of apartheid, shaping the South African women's movement in the twentieth century.

The timeframe from 1952 until 1962 was intentionally chosen in this research. This decade encompasses the wider opposition reaction against apartheid introduced in 1948, and how the FEDSAW and Black Sash initially responded to apartheid and the evolution of their ideologies in the first few years of their existence. Additionally, this period also includes the height of the Black Sash and FEDSAW's international interactions during apartheid, enabling the analysis of the correlation between their national protests and international engagements. By the beginning of the 1960s, oppositional political activity had decreased extensively due to harsher

political legislation and events that saw most opposition parties banned in South Africa. Therefore this timeframe is imperative in understanding the rise and fall of FEDSAW and the Black Sash's national and transnational development.

Through scrutinising the Black Sash and FEDSAW's networks and international influences, this study will expand scholarly understanding of how these two organisations operated independently, as well as how they worked within the South African national liberation struggle, and alongside other international women's organisations. Furthermore, this thesis contributes to a deeper analysis of the South African women's movement in the 1950s and 60s, investigating similarities, such as fighting against oppression and political injustice and differences, such as their ideological stance and links with women's organisations abroad. My study contributes to understanding how FEDSAW and the Black Sash's ideas were internationally influenced and vice versa, as well as exploring the international dialogue between the national and international.[1] The Black Sash and FEDSAW's historiographies do not discuss nor analyse these transnational influences, although archival research shows there is a strong international connection between both domestic organisations and various international organisations such as the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) and key individuals within these organisations based in Europe. These relationships are explored in this thesis and raise several important questions such as: What international connections were created? Who initiated them? What impact did they have? What role did Black Sash and FEDSAW leaders play in creating these networks? How were these networks and connections linked to the organisation's aims? To what extent were members in the Black Sash and FEDSAW exposed to these networks? To what extent did the Black Sash and FEDSAW's networks differ from each other? Did these networks fit within the wider international women's movement, and if so, how? Did the Black Sash and FEDSAW attempt to align their aims with the wider international movement or were they isolated from it all due to South Africa's unique segregationist policies? By providing answers to these questions, this thesis argues that both the FEDSAW and the Black Sash were transnational organisations, and their transnationalism is key to understanding the development of their ideological positions and their roles in anti- apartheid activism.

[1] Ellen DuBois, 'Three Decades of Women's History', *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal,* 35 (1), (2006), p. 49; Leila Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 6.

My thesis is an original and unique contribution to South African and transnational historiography, placing the women's movement in both national and international contexts. The study contributes to a limited South African women's historiography by evaluating and comparing the Black Sash and FEDSAW from an organisational and strategic perspective, as well as investigating to what extent these women were active participants in the wider anti-apartheid movement, creating international links to help their aims.

Through their transnational links, the Black Sash and FEDSAW also contributed to wider international debates specifically related to human rights. Therefore, these organisations have not only been downplayed in South African history but in the history of international women's movements. As such, my thesis recognises the significance of South African women's contributions to South African national history and the wider international women's history during the 1950s and '60s.

Historiography

My thesis contributes to four strands of historiography: transnationalism, anti-apartheid activism, South African women's history and the FEDSAW and Black Sash.

Transnationalism as a broad term emerged in the mid-nineteenth century and has multiple definitions from various scholars in attempting to define the concept and its contribution to knowledge. The term itself has been difficult to define as it encompasses many elements and has been used in multiple disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, economics and political science, where scholars have debated a single definition. This study draws on two definitions of transnationalism that illustrates and highlights the complexity of women's roles in anti-apartheid activism in South African history, and the complexity of the South African women's movement in the 1950s and '60s. Leila Rupp and Ellen DuBois define transnationalism as the movement of ideas and ideologies beyond physical boundaries.[2] Transnationalism as a concept reveals the FEDSAW and Black Sash's transnationalism was inherited from earlier South African women's organisations in

[2] DuBois, 'Three Decades of Women's History', p. 50; Rupp, *Worlds of Women,* p. 9.

the nineteenth century, but also that the federation and Sash's ideologies were influenced by national and international ambitions of world peace and equal human rights for all.

The concept of transnationalism is also used in this study to understand the role of professional and personal networks associated with both organisations. Transnational advocacy networks are created where these networks encourage and promote causes, ideas and norms for change whether they are political or social.[3] Knowledge is also spread through replicating structures,[4] such as the case with the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and earlier women's organisations in South Africa.

Anthropologists and sociologists have used the term in order to understand migration and cultural studies, while political scientists have used the term to explain policy and non-state organisations working across borders.[5] These disciplines believe that transnationalism goes beyond physical borders. As such, transnationalism opens communication and creates a dialogue between the national and international stages. This is defined by political scientist Margaret E. Keck and human rights academic Kathryn Sikkink's concept of information exchange[6] where a dialogue is evident through the interaction between social movements and elite reformers.[7] Sociologist John Markoff further adds to this concept through analysing transnationalism and social movements, claiming social movements learn from each other and contribute to broad ideas,[8] such as injustices and fighting for world peace as in the case of the WIDF. Therefore, transnationalism and social movements are inevitably intertwined.

However, sociologist Charles Tilly challenges this approach. By defining social movements as ordinary people taking part in public politics or organisations,[9] Tilly argues there is a distinct difference between social and transnational movements, where social movements have been interpreted as the grassroots on a domestic level, while the transnational movement is on a global scale.[10] These two

[3] Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, 'Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics', *International Social Science Journal,* 51 (1) (1999), p. 91.
[4] John Markoff, *Waves of Democracy: Social Movements and Political Change,* (Pine Forge Press, 1996), p. 34.
[5] Pierre Yves Saunier, *Transnational History: Theory and History*, (Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2013), p. 25.
[6] Keck, and Sikkink, 'Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics', p. 90.
[7] Markoff, *Waves of Democracy,* p. 23.
[8] Markoff, *Waves of Democracy,* p. 30.
[9] Charles Tilly and Lesley Wood, *Social Movements 1768– 2012*, (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2013), p. 4.
[10] Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 190.

movements might on occasion interact with each other, however their audiences and motivation for interactions differ, where at times this dialogue would not be necessary nor take place. Social and transnational movements run parallel to each other when organisations such as the Black Sash and FEDSAW take part in international events, and key individuals such as Jessie Powers from the Black Sash, as well as Helen Joseph, Lilian Ngoyi and Dora Tamana from the FEDSAW, represented South Africa at international conferences.

The interaction between the social and transnational movements led to political discussions between the Black Sash and FEDSAW with the international community. The basis for these discussions was the organisation's common goals of striving for human rights. According to Markoff, transnational relationships are based on political negotiation, which is not enforced by a political party, but rather through the international language for negotiation focused on human rights,[11] a prominent theme and aim for both FEDSAW and the Black Sash. Therefore, by being part of the transnational movement, one was also unavoidably becoming a political entity in one's own right.

Transnationalism has also helped to understand the development of political movements and united the grassroots level with the international community. The South African transnational women's movement is best described as having a 'boomerang effect',[12] which Keck and Sikkink define as a situation when individuals at grassroots levels need to gain support from their international allies to bring change within their own country, therefore bypassing national actors such as the state.[13] This was experienced in South Africa specifically with the FEDSAW which gave speeches at the United Nations (UN) and WIDF to help increase awareness of what was happening in the country, hoping to put additional international pressure on South Africa to change its apartheid policies. Applying this theory to history, explores the important role of the individual as well as the connection between the international community and the individual. This exchange was clear with both the FEDSAW and Black Sash's attendance to conferences and meetings in South Africa and abroad, where the knowledge exchanges was related to their political activity of fighting for justice. The boomerang theory helps us to understand the role of the individual but does not give further insight in the role of political movements or the

[11] Keck and Sikkink, 'Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics', p.100.
[12] Ibid., p. 93.
[13] Ibid.

specific nature of the relationship between the individual and the international community. This is where research in politics helps to understand the nature of these movements. This has been highlighted through 'information exchange' where reformers are use knowledge in their social movement to galvanise individuals in a specific movement.

Tilly contributes to this and argues the more international the campaigner, the more they seek organisations' approval or recognition from larger organisations such as the WIDF and UN.[14] Political scientist Sidney Tarrow further contributes to this discussion and highlights the risk that individuals in transnational networks could lose touch with grassroots[15] the more internationally active they are. Tarrow further explored whether there are tensions between the transnational and grassroots and claims there is a divide between the two concepts that could emerge if organisations do not have the same organisational aims or approaches. These disciplines enabled my study to explore and understand transnationalism from a different perspective- whether it be through social or political movements, or grassroots individuals, and thereby enriching the historical analysis of my study, to have a clearer understanding of how transnationalism contributes to the women's movement in South Africa, the strategy in which South African women's organisations were formed, how they organised themselves and the impact they had on grassroots and international levels.

From a historical perspective, transnationalism helps scholars analyse women's contributions to transnational movements and re-evaluate their role of the nation histories. Historians joined the academic discussions and debates about transnationalism by 1991, and agree that the concept adds value in understanding and analysing national historiographies [16] through understanding different perspectives and actors in national histories.

Within historical studies, a transnational perspective addressed themes such as trade and imperialism, which took precedence in historiography[17] as opposed to women's transnational activities and contributions. With that said, there is an increasing amount of literature related to international women's transnationalism, such as Leila Rupp's work which mapped the emergence of the international

[14] Tilly and Wood, *Social Movements 1768– 2012*, p. 114.
[15] Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, p. 190.
[16] Saunier, *Transnational History,* p. 11.
[17] Mary Roberts, 'The Transnationalization of Gender History', *History and Theory* 44 (2005), p. 458.

women's movement and Ian Tyrell who explored specifically the WCTU as a transnational movement.[18] Historians adopted transnationalism and tried to define the concept within the discipline. Mary Louise Roberts described transnationalism as a concept that focuses on political, economic and social interactions and connections between communities.[19] Additionally historian Rupp states these include racial, religious, ethnic and national communities and affect national and collective identities within these groups.[20] These communities expand beyond the state, and historians DuBois and Merry Wiesner –Hanks argue transnationalism and transnational history goes beyond geographical borders, and involve the movement of ideas, ideologies and debates[21] across borders, often related to identity, specifically gender and national identities.[22]

This also contributes to a bigger debate and conflict between the West's ideals and values being enforced on countries. Feminism as a concept labelled the USA and European/ American women as leaders in the transnational women's movements,[23] however it leaves little scope for colonial or third world countries to experience transnationalism according to their contextual settings at their own pace. Therefore, the transnational cannot be examined in isolation from the national. Historian Pierre-Yves Saunier states that transnational history adds value to national history by exploring crossovers between countries, and in some ways acting as a national checklist.[24] Nationalist historiographies provided a limited and egocentric perspective of the state, which was often an incomplete illustration of an event. Transnationalism was a way to challenge this as it went beyond the national, and connected countries to other states, issues and phenomena around the world. This was first used by Tyrrell to challenge American nationalist historiography, which characterised its 'exceptionalism',[25] where Americans believed their history was unique and in isolation from the rest of the world. Additionally, historian Emily Rosenberg claims transnationalism functioned beyond formalised national structures and international institutions,[26] therefore the nation was not the only actor in

[18] Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World, Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880 – 1930* (USA: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 220
[19] Ibid.
[20] Rupp, *Worlds of Women,* p. 4.
[21] DuBois, 'Three Decades of Women's History', p. 151.
[22] Merry Wiesner- Hanks, 'Crossing borders in Transnational Gender History'. *Journal of Global History,* 6 (3) (2011), p. 359.
[23] Emily Rosenberg, *Transnational Currents in a Shrinking World 1870 –1945* (London: Belknap Press, 2012), p. 85.
[24] Saunier, *Transnational History,* p. 2.
[25] Saunier, *Transnational History,* p. 27.
[26] Rosenberg, *Transnational Currents in a Shrinking World 1870 – 1945*, p. 44.

transnationalism but rather one of many including international organisations and individuals.[27]

The historical perspective of transnationalism enables this study to analyse South Africa politics and women's movement, and analyse how women politically organised themselves and created links with South African and international organisations. The transnational framework illustrates new information about the South African women's movement that was previously unknown, specifically that South African women used their transnational links to further their position in anti-apartheid activism, gain support for their fight against apartheid and strengthen a solidarity movement. This study's transnational analysis also discovers that South African women used transnationalism strategically to align themselves in the wider national liberation movement in South Africa as well as international agendas such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Through attending international meetings and being guest speakers, they had the opportunity to create alliances with international organisations while assuming their position in the national fight against apartheid.

Transnationalism adds a vital perspective in this study that provides a new perspective to both organisations, being their lesser, known international connections and the movement of ideas and knowledge between the Black Sash and FEDSAW within South Africa and the international community. Transnationalism in this study forces historians to focus on the importance including gender in the reanalysis national histories from a transnational perspective, and helps scholars to further understand the intrinsic link between gender, race and class in South Africa. Transnationalism also puts academic focus on women leaders and their international connections in further fighting against apartheid, bringing a new perspective in female leaders such as Helen Joseph, Lilian Ngoyi and Jean Sinclair, while also introducing women leaders that have been under studied such as Jessie Power, Dora Tamana and Tamara Baker.

Therefore, historians can draw a deeper understanding of transnationalism from various disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and political science, where social and political movements on a national scale and on grassroots level, help historians to use transnationalism as a framework for analysis.

[27] Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in the Global Perspective since 1798* (UK: Palgrave, 2015), p. 116.

The political understanding of 'information exchange' and sociological theory of the 'boomerang effect', as previously mentioned, enable analysis from a grassroots level and political movements.

These interdisciplinary discussions and debates about the term, demonstrates the complexity of transnationalism, and the fluidity of the concept itself. Rosenberg compares transnationalism to a current that is ever- changing, and while it can help to understand and further analyse history, it can also cause disruption to the cultures or identities that were previously established.[28] The concept is flexible in which it responds to different issues in multiple countries at various time periods. For example, transnationalism in the South African women's movement in the 1880s was connected to suffrage and temperance, and the movement of knowledge and ideas spread through international tours where overseas organisations came to South Africa. By contrast, transnationalism in the 1950s South African women's movement responded to the need for human rights and international peace, due to the local context of apartheid and international context of the Second World War and Cold War. By the 1950s, South African women were the transnational actors who went abroad to international conferences in order to share their experiences and knowledge about apartheid, while also gaining international support for their cause of fighting against apartheid.

This fluidity demonstrates the versatility of transnationalism and emphasises the multifaceted nature of the concept, where influences travelled in multiple directions between women in the FEDSAW and Black Sash, several organisations both locally and internationally, and between several different countries in Europe and Asia. The Black Sash and FEDSAW did this primarily through sharing their knowledge and experience of apartheid, educating an international audience about how South African women were fighting against apartheid, and thereby forming alliances and networks with like-minded organisations such as the WIDF and World Peace Council. FEDSAW and the Black Sash also shared their publications and journals with international organisations as a way of spreading the word about their fight against apartheid.

[28] Rosenberg, *Transnational Currents in a Shrinking World 1870 –1945*, p. 46.

There was a negative consequence of transnationalism in South Africa during apartheid, where oppositional organisations were seen as a threat by the National Party government due to their international connections and possible links with communism. The fear of communism was personified in the Treason Trial from 1956-1961, where oppositional organisations and leaders were labelled as communist and thereby banned from political activities. This trial shortened the life span of organisations such as FEDSAW and haltered the political activities of leaders as a way of destabilising their position in the national liberation movement and fight against apartheid. Therefore, transnationalism was seen as a threat where it strengthened alliances, influence and political power of oppositional organisations.

Transnationalism was deliberately chosen as concept in this study, rather than internationalism. Transnationalism is a flexible concept and focuses on connections and networks,[29] which encompasses multiple countries and is the study of diasporas (social and political) that cross national boundaries. Whereas, internationalism is more limiting and restrictive in that it tends to focus on state and policy.[30] Halliday argues liberal internationalism focuses more on peace and cooperation,[31] and while this can be closely related to the motivation behind transnational movements, it still emphasises the state is the main actor in analysis, unlike transnationalism that places emphasis on the individual and social movements as a catalyst. Similarly, the theory about the centre (British domination) and periphery (colonial links)[32] has not been used in this thesis as transnationalism transcends the British Empire. The South African transnational women's movement had strong links to the USA and was influenced by other commonwealth states such as Australia and New Zealand, while the Black Sash and FEDSAW women were linked to European and Asian countries. The hierarchical structure that is present in the centre-periphery theory does not exist in transnationalism, with the latter emphasising more the movement of ideas or knowledge and networks or connections created as a result.

Transnationalism helps scholars to understand women's contribution to South African politics as it re-enforced South African women's political roles in anti-

[29] Saunier, *Transnational History,* p. 6.
[30] Cecelia Lynch, 'The Promise and Problems of Internationalism', *Global Governance,* (1999), p. 83.
[31] Fred Halliday, ' Three Concepts of Internationalism', *International Affairs,* 64 (2) (1988), p. 187.
[32] Dane, Kennedy, 'Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 24 (3) (1996), p. 348.

apartheid activism, reasserting them in the national liberation movement. This demonstrates how organised and politically active women were, their contribution to the national liberation struggle and to what extent they collaborated with national organisations. It also demonstrated the networks of the women's movement, illustrating they sought out support in solidarity and fighting against discrimination on a national and international scale.

Transnationalism adds a new dimension to the South African women's movement, bridging the gap between national and international issues. For example, on the local level, passes and anti-apartheid activism was experienced in South Africa, while internationally, human rights and world peace were a concern. Transnationalism facilitated local and international issues to reach new audiences, increasing organisational impact and being part of the international community.

My work will build on Rosenberg, Saunier, Tilly, Tarrow, Keck and Sikkink, Markoff, Roberts, DuBois and Wiesner-Hanks' definitions, discussions and understanding of transnationalism. My PhD contributes to the transnational debate by demonstrating the intrinsic link and influence between the transnational and national, and the influential role of the grassroots leaders that became transnational protagonists. Therefore, my thesis approaches transnationalism from an historical perspective in which national histories of South African women fighting against apartheid and injustices are challenged, and demonstrate they were closely related in South African history where activists such as Ngoyi, Joseph, Solomon and Schreiner used their international connections to help galvanise women from the local level.

The transnational framework in my thesis further helps to understand how FEDSAW and the Black Sash were structured within the national liberation movement, as well as how women contributed to the fight against apartheid, both domestically and abroad, while integrating with the international community. The transnational element also helps to understand FEDSAW and the Black Sash's shared values with the international community, and to what extent this engagement took place. This approach helps to place the South African women's movement and organisations in the wider international context of women's and the international transnational movement.

The second strand of the literature that this thesis contributes to, is the history of anti-apartheid activism. 'Anti-apartheid activism' is a rarely used term in South

African history to explain the liberation movement and national liberation struggle against apartheid, however this term is used in this study to explain and describe acts and protests against apartheid, specifically related to the Black Sash and FEDSAW, as it encapsulates their role in fighting against apartheid proactively and pragmatically, while being part of the wider liberation movement.

Many historians and scholars have written about the struggle against apartheid and liberation movement during the 1950s using a race or class framework. David Everatt's research explores white opposition to apartheid specifically in the 1950s,[33] while Paul Maylam analyses the racial hierarchy during apartheid.[34] Additionally, Davenport and Saunders' book *South Africa: A Modern History*, details the racial development of the country and the various layers of complexity and diversity in what would become South Africa,[35] with the main focus being on race, although they also address the cultural conflict between the Afrikaners and English in South Africa's earlier history. Autobiographies and biographies also comprise a significant part of the literature on anti-apartheid activism, most notably, Nelson Mandela's autobiography, which focused on his personal experience of fighting against apartheid and the organisational collaborations that took place, as well as events that fought against it. This thesis contributes to the history of anti-apartheid activism through adding to the Black Sash and FEDSAW's contribution to the national liberation movement, therefore writing women into the anti-apartheid struggle.

The third historiographical strand my study contributes to, is women and gender history in South Africa. South African women's political fight against injustices and oppression is multi- layered and understudied by scholars. Issues of race, class and imperialism take precedence in South African historiography, leaving a notable gap and misrepresentation on women's contributions to South African history, especially through their transnational links and connections. There has been limited literature researched and published about South African women related to transnationalism, with most of these publications focused on the earlier South African women's organisations.

[33] David Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism: White Opposition to Apartheid in the 1950s*, (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009), p. 34.
[34] Paul Maylam, South Africa's Racial Past: The History and Historiography of Racism, Segregation, and Apartheid, (UK: Routledge, 2017), p. 179.
[35] Rodney Davenport and Christopher Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 402.

The South African women's movement is unique in which it is difficult to separate from the wider national framework of apartheid. Shireen Hassim argues this resulted in the women's movement being labelled as a 'separate organisational force,'[36] that did not adhere to the international waves of feminism, but rather responded to localised political issues. Maxine Molyneux reiterates this sentiment and states the South African women's movement were intrinsically linked to the broader political context.[37] Women and the gender struggle were seen as an important part of the national liberation movement, with the earlier women's movement not being concerned with patriarchy's challenges.[38] Therefore in the South African context, the women's movement especially in the 1950s and '60s was not linked to feminism but rather were a fundamental part of the national liberation movement, where women could be politically represented. This thesis adopts and reaffirms this stance through primary source analysis, and demonstrates the impact of their transnational links was directly related to their anti-apartheid activism. None of these organisations labelled or adopted feminism in their aims or ideological development. Rather they were focused on the national liberation struggle through collaborating with several oppositional organisations, adopting and aligning with documents such as the Freedom Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and creating aims of ending discrimination and inequality in South Africa. Therefore, the women's movement has been interpreted in this thesis as organisations consisting of only women that fought in political solidarity against injustices alongside their male counterparts. Therefore membership rather than their ideological stance on concepts such as feminism, has defined the women's movement in this study.

Due to the political nature of my thesis, I have included women's organisations that had a political motive and fought against apartheid in the 1950s. Therefore, no church or welfare organisations were studied in this thesis as it was not relevant to my argument, which focuses specifically on anti-apartheid activism in the Black Sash and FEDSAW from a transnational perspective in the 1950s and early 1960s. The earlier women's movement included organisations that were focused on temperance or suffrage, however they were founded on transnational

[36] Shireen Hassim, 'Voices, Hierarchies and Spaces: Reconfiguring the Women's Movement in Democratic South Africa', *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, 32 (2), (2006), p. 178.
[37] Maxine Molyneux. 'Analysing Women's Movements', *Development and Change* 29 (2) (1998), p. 32.
[38] Thenjiwe Mtintso, 'Representivity: False Sisterhood or Universal Women's Interests? The South African Experience', *Feminist Studies*, 29 (3) (2003), p 573.

links and are analysed in this thesis in relation to their transnational nature and how this impacted South African women to organise themselves politically.

The international women's movement and the transnational connections forged between South African women activists and the UK, USA and European countries, are vital to understanding how and why South African women evolved politically. Recently books and articles linking the twentieth century South African women's organisations to a wider international context have emerged,[39] indicating a clear connection and inevitable influence by other countries, playing an important role in the development of South Africa's women's movement. These include works by scholars such as Julia Wells; Pamela Scully; Pamela Brooks; Deborah Gaitskell; Yasemin Soysal, Helen Dampier, Suzanne Shanahan and Francisco Ramiz; which will be discussed later in this section. The early South African transnational women's organisations were established by the USA (WCTU and WEAU) and the UK (WEL), where individuals were important in creating transnational networks.

Women were not only politically active in the country, but both the nineteenth and twentieth century women's movements had international links with Europe and the USA further encouraging their political activism while demonstrating their eagerness to get involved politically. American women's organisations played an important role in inspiring the South African women's movement. South Africa's first women's organisation was directly inspired by the USA when the WCTU toured South Africa. As a result of this tour a new WCTU branch in the Cape colony was created in 1889 by Mary Leavitt, an American WCTU member. The Union was reformist in its ethos, associating women's issues with wider movements such as religion, moral reform, peace, and the abolition of slavery.[40] The WCTU addressed the consequences of alcohol in society, and women were active in protecting families and wider societies from its effects.

The WCTU was conscious of the wider international women's movement and the struggle for women's suffrage. As a result, the Cape WCTU created a franchise department in 1892[41] encouraging South African women to participate in the fight for

[39] Julia Wells, *We have Done with Pleading: The Women's 1913 Anti-pass Campaign* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1991), p. 40; Ian Fletcher, Pauline Levine and Laura Nym., *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire: Citizenship, Nation and Race* (Routledge: London, 2000), p. 43.; Pamela Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes: Black Women's Resistance in the U.S South and South Africa* (USA: University of Massachusetts, 2008), p.12.

[40] Francisco Ramirez, Yasemin Soysal and Suzanne Shanahan, 'The Changing Logic of Political Citizenship: Cross National Acquisition of Women's Suffrage Rights, 1890 – 1990', *American Sociological Review* 62 (5) (1997), p. 735; Rupp, *Worlds of Women,* p. 71.; Cherryl Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa* (South Africa: University of Cape Town, 1979).

[41] Cherryl Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (South Africa: David Phillips Publishers, 1990), p. 3.

women's suffrage. The establishment of the franchise department signified the WCTU was not only acknowledging but also contributing to the first wave of feminism,[42] where fighting for suffrage became an international protest and its members were part of an international movement.[43] Therefore the WCTU was fundamental for South African women to become part of international women's suffrage.

Additionally, the USA's influence was also important in the South African women's movement in the twentieth century with the creation of the Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union (WEAU). This union was an umbrella organisation aimed at achieving suffrage, and was advised by Carrie Chapman Catt, an American suffrage leader and President of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance's (IWSA), to separate the women's movement from race and advocate solely for white women's votes.[44] Taking Catt's advice, this fragmented the women's movement in South Africa from being a gender issue to also being a racial one. As a result, by 1930, white women in South Africa were granted the vote, whereas black, coloured (a term still used in South African to describe people of mixed race, descendants of slaves and/ or Malay), and Indian women were only able to vote as South African citizens in 1994 when apartheid was abolished and replaced by democracy.

The racial divide was used as a comparative framework by scholars and measured political and social challenges women faced. A comparative study between the USA and South Africa by Pamela Brooks argued that local communities and regional developments influenced black women being involved in mass demonstrations in the 1950s.[45] Brooks' study illustrated the local impact of organisations such as FEDSAW and the Black Sash, as well as the differences and similarities experienced by black women fighting to get the vote. Through this comparison, black women's protests in the 1950s are brought into an international arena, thereby demonstrating the wider impact of their protests. Similarly, Caroline Daley and Melanie Nolan argued that countries such as New Zealand, Australia and the USA had a racial component within their own local women's movements

[42] Tyrrell, *Woman's World, Woman's Empire,* p. 220.
[43] Ellen DuBois, 'Outgrowing the Compact of the Fathers: Equal Rights, Woman Suffrage, and the United States Constitution, 1820 – 1878*', The Journal of American History* 74 (3) (1987), p. 839.
[44] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35; Occasional Paper, Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union 1926, p. 5.
[45] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes: Black Women's Resistance in the U.S South and South Africa*, p. 27.

contributing to their identity. Therefore women had the dual role of balancing participation in the international women's movement whilst also developing a local identity, which could impact their international engagement. These studies are important in understanding the additional burden race placed on women, who were already at a disadvantage in a patriarchal political setting, while trying to engage with international counterparts.

There is even more limited literature around South African women's connection to UK transnational history. Gaitskell explored connections between the Women's Enfranchisement League (WEL) and the UK by arguing the League had a strong connection with the suffrage movement in the UK[46] through South African women leaders such as Olive Schreiner, Julia Solly and Georgiana Solomon; and was influenced by the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), established in 1905. Solomon travelled to London on several occasions and took part in the WSPU protests with her daughter Daisy Solomon. Wells also raised the role of British suffragists in South African protests and stated WSPU's protests were reported in South African newspapers, especially those in Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State colony,[47] reinforcing the influence and awareness of the British women's organisations in South Africa. Adding onto Gaitskell and Well's articles, Dampier argues Schreiner used her personal and international contacts to help advance South Africa's suffrage movement.[48] This research further built on these perspectives when the author published an article exploring the WCTU and WEL Cape branch's transnational connections as fundamental to developing the South African women's movement.[49] South Africa's transnational women's movement has its roots with nineteenth century reformism, where women's political voices were intertwined in religion and suffrage. However, the focus shifted from suffrage to human rights by the middle of the century. Not only were basic human rights being questioned but also legalised racial discrimination was an increasing concern in South Africa and internationally. Overall there has been limited literature published on South Africa's earlier transnational women's movement and how this impacted

[46] Deborah Gaitskell, 'The Imperial Tie: Obstacle or Asset for South Africa's Women Suffragists before 1930?', *South African Historical Journal* 47 (1) (2002), pp. 1 – 23.
[47] Wells, *We have Done with Pleading,* p. 40.
[48] Helen Dampier, '"Going on with our Little Movement in the Hum Drum-Way which Alone is Possible in a Land Like This": Olive Schreiner and Suffrage Networks in Britain and South Africa, 1905-1913'. *Women's History Review* 25 (4) (2016), p. 536-550.
[49] Monica Fernandes, 'The Transnational Factor: The Beginnings of South Africa's Women's Movement', *New Contree* Special Edition 73 (2015), p. 181.

the South African women's movement in the twentieth century, specifically the 1950s and 60s. The USA and UK were paramount in influencing the development of the South African women's movement. This mixture created an important 'rhetoric of women's movement in South Africa'[50], where an eclectic mix of the USA and UK's approach in their own women's movements influenced how South African women organised themselves and reacted to political developments related to their racial status and class.

The dominant themes in South African historiography about the 1950s and 1960s include race- and class- based analyses, often at the expense of gender and women's history.[51] Race, class and gender are major themes that are intertwined in a culturally complex and diverse country. Labour movements detailed a limited perspective on South African women's history. Studies by Iris Berger[52]; Sheila Meintjes[53]; Elaine Unterhalter[54]; M. Bahati Kuumba[55]; Belinda Bozzoli[56]; and Alan Mabin[57] included investigations on urbanisation, labour and anti-apartheid activism of non-white workers from a race and class perspective. More specifically, historians have focused on women's roles as labourers, with a case study of Afrikaner women in the garment trade unions[58]; and African women's working and living conditions within an apartheid South Africa from a personal perspective. Therefore to fully comprehend women's political contribution to South African society and history, analysis needs to go beyond race and class, and extend to gender.

The lack of formally documented women's history in historiography in South Africa implies the limitation of women's political activism and their roles in South African society. Women's national and transnational activism is largely invisible in most publications, and political activists such as Bernstein[59] and Joseph[60] believed

[50] Pamela Scully, White Maternity and Black Childhood: The Rhetoric of Race in the South African Women's Suffrage Movement 1895 –1926 in Fletcher, Levine, and Nym, *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire,* p. 69..
[51] Penelope Hetherington, 'Women in South Africa: The historiography in English', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26 (2) (1993), p. 243.
[52] Iris Berger, 'Sources of Class Consciousness: South African Women in Recent Labor Struggles', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 16 (1) (1983), p. 51.
[53] Sheila Meintjes, 'The Women's Struggle for Equality during South Africa's Transition to Democracy', *Transformation* 30 (1996), p. 47.
[54] Elaine Unterhalter, 'Women in Struggle', *Third World Quarterly*, 54 (1983), p. 888.
[55] Bahati Kuumba, M, 'You've Struck a Rock' Comparing Gender, Social Movements and Transformation in the United States and South Africa' *Perspectives* (2002), p. 505.
[56] Belinda Bozzoli, 'Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 9 (2) (1983), p. 140.
[57] Alan Mabin, 'Segregation: The Origins of the group Areas Act and Its Planning Apparatuses', Journal of Southern African Studies 18 (3) (1992), p. 407.
[58] Solly Sachs, *Rebels Daughters* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1957), p. 32.
[59] Hilda Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears: Women in Apartheid South Africa* (London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1985), p. 51.
[60] Helen Joseph, *Side by Side: The Autobiography of Helen Joseph* (New York: William Morrow & Co, 1987), p. 14.

women were seen as passive actors with unimportant histories,[61] due to their domestic duties.[62] It is increasingly evident through primary source analysis that women's political activism against segregation and discrimination existed throughout South African women's history.

South African women's organisations were eclectic and diverse, responding to the country's changing political context. The earliest women's organisations were primarily concerned with achieving the vote, rather than fighting against passes. The latter emerged among South African women about two decades after the first women's organisations were created. Advocating for the vote was directly influenced by international women's movements with the focus being on suffrage. However, on a local level, the demand for women's votes was also evident. By the late nineteenth century, suffrage was a contested topic in the Cape colony, where black men had the right to vote depending on their education and property status, while women could not, indicating that enfranchisement in the Cape was not a racial but rather a gender issue. This contributed to the formation of the WEL, dedicated to achieving the vote for women; and the WEAU was created to further advance the fight for women's votes in South Africa.[63] Therefore suffrage on a local level was an important contribution to the origins of the South African women's movement.

Julia Wells claims newspapers in Bloemfontein (where the pass protests originated) often published stories about British suffragettes and their protests, indicating that while these protests were about different issues in different countries, the British women's movement and fight for enfranchisement encouraged and influenced South African women to organise themselves and politically protest against inequality.[64] Black women in the Orange Free State were amongst the first to formally organise themselves and protest against passes imposed on them in 1913. Elaine Unterhalter argued that black women were the most vulnerable in society and faced 'triple oppression' by segregation policies in South Africa linked to their race, class and gender.[65] It was this vulnerability that forced black women to formally protest against passes and become the most politically active women in South African society.[66]

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[61] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 38.
[62] Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, p. vii.
[63] Gaitskell, 'The Imperial Tie' p. 2.
[64] Wells, *We have Done with Pleading,* p. 42.
[65] Unterhalter, 'Women in Struggle', p. 887.
[66] Cherryl Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa* (London: Oxford Press, 1991), p. 12.

Reformism was used to describe and understand the 1913 protest in South African women's history.[67] Sociologist Cherryl Walker writes extensively about South African women's history[68] and contends that an organised and formal black protest created by women was inevitable due to the domestic pressure black women were exposed to. However, not all historians identify the South African women's movement as reformist. Wells argued the protest formed part of a broader historical perspective of the women's movement and labelled it as post-structuralist in nature.[69] This approach enabled women to be acknowledged as active participants in South African history, contributing to the complexity and understanding of race, class and gender in South African society.

The South African transnational women's movements have not been studied extensively as they have been overshadowed by dominant historical themes such as race and class in South African history and trade and imperialism in transnational history. This study adds a new perspective in transnational and South African history, giving a new perspective to women's history studies, while also exploring the nature of the relationship South African women's political organisations experienced between national and transnational contexts. This thesis will build on the limited transnational and South African women's literature, linking transnationalism to South African women's history.

The last strand of historiography my PhD contributes to, is the current literature on the FEDSAW and the Black Sash. Much of the focus on FEDSAW has centred around the issue of class. Of the two, the Black Sash has been the more extensively documented in secondary accounts, compared to FEDSAW, although neither have been studied comprehensively from a transnational perspective in the 1950s and 60s, nor have they been compared.

Limited secondary literature solely about FEDSAW was published in the 1970s and 1980s as part of a Marxist historiography, creating a strong link between FEDSAW, trade unions and class. Walker created the single most relevant source directly related to FEDSAW's historiography. In her work '*Women and Resistance in South Africa'*, Walker documented FEDSAW's protests from 1954 until 1963, focusing specifically on the organisation of their pass protests. Walker argued that

; Bernstein *For their Triumphs and for their Tears: Women in Apartheid South Africa,*, p. 46.
[67] Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa,* p. 24.
[68] Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, p. 3.
[69] Wells, *We have Done with Pleading, p.* 21.

the study of women needed to be incorporated into wider South African history and women ought to be acknowledged for their contribution to the national liberation movement.[70] Walker's monograph was one of the first scholarly sources that formally documented earlier South African women's history and FEDSAW. From this perspective, Walker's work was ground breaking, focusing on a previously neglected and under researched part of South African history. Moreover, Hilda Bernstein, one of FEDSAW's co-founders and an anti-apartheid activist, also contributed to FEDSAW's historiography and argued that black women in South African society experienced a three-fold level of oppression being race, gender and class.[71] Additionally, Walker and Bernstein believed the creation of a women's organisation that formally opposed apartheid such as FEDSAW was inevitable,[72] as non-white women also felt the effects of segregation and apartheid.

Personal testimonies from other FEDSAW leaders are also available. Helen Joseph, FEDSAW and Congress of Democrats leader in the 1950s, wrote two memoirs '*Side by Side'* (1987) and '*Tomorrow's Sun'* (1968), specifying her political experience in South Africa and the rise of women in opposition against apartheid. Joseph's diary about the Treason Trial, *'If this Be Treason'* (1963), details the functioning of FEDSAW and women's politics during the 1960s, when its political activity as an organisation decreased. Joseph also detailed her experience in FEDSAW and other events during the 1950s, including the Congress of the People and the Treason Trial. During the Treason Trial, which took place from 1956 until 1961, 156 anti-apartheid leaders were accused of treason and banned from politics. This included individuals such as Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Helen Joseph and Lilian Ngoyi. Joseph's account gives the reader insights into just how inhumane the apartheid laws were and the extent of her isolation and punishment inflicted, while revealing the unity and organisation of opposition organisations such as the FEDSAW and Congress of Democrats.

A Marxist approach related to FEDSAW has been more commonly explored by scholars and gave a better understanding as to why the organisation developed. Historian Iris Berger analysed women's roles in trade unions, class and economic development. In her publication '*Threads of Solidarity: Women in South African*

[70] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa*, p. 8.
[71] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 11.
[72] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa*, p. 14; Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears: Women in Apartheid South Africa*, p. 81.

Industry, 1900–1980', Berger argued that cooperation between the races was necessary for women to combat the consequences of apartheid legislation and also to protest in solidarity.[73] Berger's study contributed to the Marxist historiography of South African women, where emphasis was placed on the working class regardless of race. Similarly, historian Belinda Bozzoli claimed the relationship between female oppression, capitalism and racism was the consequence of a 'domestic economy' which women in rural areas were more exposed to. Adding onto this interaction between female oppression, capitalism and racism, Mirriam Zwane's unpublished MA thesis focused on urban resistance in relation to FEDSAW. Zwane argued that black women in urban areas were politically active prior to the 1950s, and established themselves in trade unions, which directly influenced the creation of FEDSAW.[74] These studies contributed to a Marxist historiographical perspective of South African women where class added further insight to FEDSAW as an organisation while fitting into a wider narrative of historiographical writing.

By the early 1990s, Wells labelled the South African women's movement as post-structuralist,[75] emphasising that women's roles went beyond family and domesticity as they contributed to a broader history.[76] Walker argued that FEDSAW members were not just protesting as workers, but also as mothers, wives and politicised citizens.[77] This emphasised that FEDSAW members were active political citizens who challenged their traditional roles and went beyond their domestic expectations. Through challenging stereotypical roles for women, FEDSAW strove to be recognised as part of the wider anti-apartheid movement. In the 1950s, the South African women's movement, including FEDSAW, negotiated 'its relationship with the broader anti-apartheid movement'[78] forming relationships with dominant opposition political parties (such as the ANC and the SAIC) while remaining an autonomous women's organisation. Joseph in particular, continually referred to the Federation in archival materials as part of a women's movement.[79] The Federation was a fundamental part of how women organised themselves politically and how they viewed themselves in South African politics. They were not a women's organisation

[73] Iris Berger, *Threads of Solidarity: Women in South African Industry, 1900-1980*, (Indiana University Press: USA, 1992), p. 23.
[74] Miriam Zwane, *The Federation of South African Women and aspects of Urban Women's Resistance to the Politics of Racial Segregation* (Unpublished MA Dissertation, Rand Afrikaans University, 2000), p. 7.
[75] Wells, *We have Done with Pleading, p.* 28.
[76] Laura Downs, *Writing Gender History (*London*:* Bloomsbury Academic, 2004), p. 8.
[77] Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945,* p. 32.
[78] Isabel Casmiro, Joy Kwesiga, Alice Mungwa, and Aili Tripp, *African Women's Movements: Changing Political Landscapes* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 32.
[79] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A1985, A4.3.8, Helen Joseph files, p. 4.

solely focused on women's rights. Instead they created an outlet for women to become politically involved and fight against apartheid, joining the wider national liberation movement. Therefore, their purpose was focused on developing South African women's presence and contribution to the liberation movement. The need to negotiate this relationship meant FEDSAW saw their rightful place as part of the wider, South African national liberation struggle and were increasing their visibility and contribution to the movement.

There is nonetheless an opportunity for FEDSAW's historiography to be revisited and expanded. The Federation's Marxist historiography gives an insight into the female worker's plight during the 1950s, and how women regardless of their race and class united against apartheid. However, it does not explore the FEDSAW's international links, motivation or ideological changes, and their strategic networking, both national and international, which contributed to their fight against apartheid. The Federation's strategy and organisation goes beyond the class-consciousness constraints of the 1950s. There is a much richer and detailed perspective about the FEDSAW that current historiography has not acknowledged nor investigated. FEDSAW's international links with women's organisations and individuals influenced the way they approached racial and gender inequality in South Africa; and how they would evolve ideologically as an organisation. They also looked to past women's organisations for inspiration to fight against apartheid and were a product of decades of transnational dialogues, women's political activism, education and experiences. This thesis reveals this new perspective through analysing FEDSAW's international networks and contacts, thereby producing a transnational account of the organisation during the national liberation movement.

As with FEDSAW, the Black Sash's historiography also consists primarily of personal memoirs and testimonies. These contributed to understanding the motives and ideologies of the Black Sash[80] as well as how the organisation was perceived by fellow comrades such as Helen Joseph and Nelson Mandela. As personal memoirs, these publications did not seek to develop or engage in a scholarly discourse about the movement, but rather represent the author's personal experiences. Nonetheless, these publications are useful in that they offer insight into how the Sash functioned,

[80] Mary Burton, The Black Sash Story: Protest and Service Recorded in the Archives, *English Academy Review*, 27 (2) (2010), p. 131.; Ruth First, and Ann Scott, *Olive Schreiner* (USA: University of Michigan, 1980), p. 261; Estella Musiiwa, 'Frances Baard's and Helen Joseph's Struggle against Apartheid, 1950–1963: A Comparative Analysis', *Histories* 57 (1) (2012), p. 68; Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (UK: Little, Brown and Company,1994), p. 75.; and Barbara Maclean, *Strike a Woman, Strike a Rock: Fighting for Freedom in South Africa,* Trenton (New Jersey: African World Press, 2004), p. 26.

and they are used in this study to further support and validate archival accounts of events and protests. In 1956 Mirabel Rogers published a formal record of the Black Sash's first year.[81] This source formally documented the functioning of the organisation, its aims and objections to apartheid in the wider South African context during its first year as an organisation. Additionally, Cherry Michelman analysed the Black Sash's intention as an organisation and how it fitted within the concept of liberalism in the 1950s.[82] Mary Burton, Black Sash president from 1986 until 1990, wrote about the Black Sash's functioning that included both a personal account and archival research from 1955 to the present.[83] Burton's work brought a newer perspective about the organisation's past, helping to make sense of previously controversial topics surrounding the organisation, such as their white– only membership criteria and decisions surrounding their initiatives and protests.

Like FEDSAW, the Black Sash was a controversial organisation during the 1950s, and this has divided opinions among academics and political activists on what exactly the organisation's aims were and their purpose in South African society. Academic Sheila Meintjes argues human rights was its main objective[84], while Berger claims the Black Sash's campaign was against the abolition of the coloured vote[85] and the Senate Bill,[86] which would legally increase the Senate, so legislation and proposals such as removing coloured people from the Common Voters' Roll could be legalised more easily. Scholars, activists and even Black Sash members themselves were confused about the Sash's ideology and unclear identity both within the Sash and amongst the public. Scholars broadly agree the Sash were concerned with achieving some sort of racial justice in South Africa, whether it was preserving the coloured people's vote in the Cape or protesting against more general unjust apartheid laws.

A popular framework of analysing the Black Sash has been through liberalism. Jennifer Scott's unpublished PhD thesis argues the Black Sash relied on liberalism as a political framework in order to evolve in South Africa's changing political environment between 1955 until 1990.[87] Similarly, Eileen Benjamin's

[81] Mirabel Rogers, *The Black Sash: South African's Fight for Democracy* (Johannesburg: Rotonews Ltd, 1956), p. 2.
[82] Cherry Michelman, *The Black Sash of South Africa: A Case Study in Liberalism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 25.
[83] Mary Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice* (South Africa: Jacana, 2015), p. 21.
[84] Meintjes, 'The Women's Struggle for Equality during South Africa's Transition to Democracy', p. 64.
[85] Iris Berger, *South Africa in World History* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 42.
[86] Kathryn Spink, *Black Sash: The Beginning of a Bridge in South Africa* (Methuen London: Great Britain, 1991), p. 18.
[87] Jennifer Scott, *The Black Sash: A Case Study of Liberalism in South Africa, 1955–1990* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 1991), p. 4.

unpublished MA thesis claims liberalism was important for the Black Sash's changing identity in South Africa between 1955 and 2005.[88] Some studies have challenged the Black Sash's link to liberalism. Marece Wenhold's unpublished thesis politically analysed the Black Sash through their approach to public policy, arguing they had transformed from a pressure group in the 1950s to an interest group.[89] The Black Sash's ideology was fascinating for scholars to study as it was contradictory in many ways and changed drastically over time. This thesis will analyse and explain the organisation's ideological development and its link to transnationalism.

Despite being an exclusively white organisation, the Black Sash forged multiracial relationships with other organisations. Kathryn Spink claims the Black Sash built networks and contacts with women and men from different organisations and races, because their overall aim to create a liberal society was shared by these other organisations.[90] Moreover, Rebekah Lee argues that the Black Sash created advice offices to help vulnerable black women who suffered the consequences of social immobility,[91] and used these offices as strategies to create inter-racial alliances with black women.[92] These studies defended the Black Sash's stance towards race as a white-women only organisation, by advocating that the Black Sash organisation worked closely with and fought for justice for black women. As a white women's only organisation, the Black Sash's approach to race was controversial and limited its impact and success in its effectiveness in wider South African society and its role in the liberation movement. Bozzoli claims that women in rural areas such as Phokeng saw Black Sash members as outsiders, although they were still partially accepted by the black community for the work they had done.[93] Black women could not become Sash members until 1963 and this limited the Black Sash's impact and exposure to issues black women experienced as well as maintaining the exclusivity of the Black Sash.

The Black Sash's aims changed over time, responding to different political contexts in South Africa. Through analysing their international connections and

[88] Eileen Benjamin, *A Historical Analysis of Aspects of the Black Sash, 1955–2001* (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2004), p. 12.
[89] Marece Wenhold, *The Black Sash: Assessment of a South African Political Interest Group* (Unpublished MPhil Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2005), p. 15.
[90] Spink, *Black Sash: The Beginning of a Bridge in South Africa*, p. 29.
[91] Rebekah Lee, *African Women and Apartheid: Migration and Settlement in Urban South Africa* (I.B. Tauris Publishers: London, 2009), p. 7.
[92] Donna Cywinski, *'History and our Children will Defend Us': Motherism, Christianity and the Gendered Interpretation of Political Morality by the Black Sash of South Africa, 1955–59*, (Unpublished MA dissertation, George Mason University, 2010), p. 9.
[93] Belinda Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, life strategy and migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983* (London: James Curry Ltd, 1991), p. 14.

involvement in transnationalism, my study creates knowledge of the lesser-known subject of how transnationalism helped develop the organisation's ideological stance.

The only comparative study on FEDSAW and the Black Sash is an unpublished MA thesis by Kathryn Sturman, who compared the Black Sash and FEDSAW to patriarchal discourses about women's roles in South African politics in the 1950s, and argued these discourses restricted women's political activity, therefore shaping and encouraging the emergence of both organisations.[94] Sturman and Walker's research tried to explain these organisations from a feminist perspective, where feminism was used as a theory to clarify and understand why these organisations emerged, however their historiographical perspective is limited and challenged by the evidence presented in this thesis. Literature on both organisations has assumed they were related to feminism as they were women's organisations solely for women members.[95] However sources consulted for this study suggest that feminism in the 1950s and '60s was not something that connected the FEDSAW and Black Sash to the international community. Human rights, not feminism, was the common thread that linked both organisations to international debates and dialogues.

Additionally, the FEDSAW and Black Sash were distinguishable from other human rights and anti-apartheid activism organisations in South Africa, as they were the only political women's organisations solely for South African women that were not a female branch of a specific political organisation such as ANCWL would be for the ANC for example. Instead, they were a political outlet for women to be involved in anti-apartheid activism and protest against racial and political injustices in the country. Aside from membership, the Black Sash and FEDSAW were also unique in their aims in which they were dedicated to fighting against apartheid, and assumed their placed in the wider national liberation movement.

FEDSAW was the only women's organisation that united women of all races from oppositional political parties and trade unions, while the Black Sash were the only white women's political organisation that fought against apartheid in the 1950s. Both organisations were pioneering in their contribution to the national liberation movement.

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[94] Kathryn Sturman, T*he Federation of South African Women and the Black Sash: Constraining and Contestatory Discourses about Women in Politics, 1954-1958* (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1996), p. 9.
[95] Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945,* p. 42.

Overall, this thesis contributes to these four historiographical strands – transnationalism, anti-apartheid activism, South African women's history and the FEDSAW and Black Sash. This study challenges the already limited Marxist and feminist historiography, advocating a revisionist approach by expanding South African women's history and creating a transnational women's history in the 1950s and '60s. My study directly contributes to the very limited historiography on the Black Sash and FEDSAW, through exploring and understanding how transnationalism was central to both organisations origins, ideologies and role in anti-apartheid activism, as well as exploring transnationalism's impact on them in the late 1950s and '60s.

The changing historical landscape and the role of communism

The South African transnational women's movement responded to the changing historical landscape on a national and international scale. The most notable international events such as the Great Depression, First and Second World Wars and the Cold War, influenced how the FEDSAW and Black Sash used transnationalism in the 1950s and which organisations they interacted with.

The origins of the federation's transnational link dates back to the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), who later changed their name to the South African Communist Party (SACP). Created in 1921 with the aim of fighting for equal rights for all,[96] the CPSA were established by white liberalists and socialists who, according to Everatt, were 'radicalised by the Second World War'[97] which influenced their ideals of fighting for equality for all South Africans, regardless of race.[98] According to Davenport and Saunders, the CPSA realised the only way to achieve any social change in South Africa, would be through forming strong alliances with the ANC and supporting African nationalism.[99] The CPSA's membership included men and women, and as an organisation worked alongside the ANC to fight against racism in South Africa, while promoting a multiracial, equal society.

It was in this context that the CPSA responded to issues related to the Great Depression from 1929 until 1931, which resulted in increased unemployment rates in rural and urban areas, and further encouraged the movement of men and women from rural to urban areas. Through the process of urbanisation, women became

[96] Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, p, 19.
[97] Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, p. 4.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Davenport and Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, p. 363.

increasingly concerned about societal issues such as discrimination at work, the increased cost of living, and Louise Vincent argues this is why the CPSA and trade unions were appealing to women[100] and resulted in a decline of women in the South African temperance movement.

Unemployment and increasing poverty levels continued into the Second World War from 1939 until 1945, which further influenced women to politically organise themselves from grassroots levels. This led to the creation of trade unions such as the Food and Canning Workers' Union in 1941, and women's political organisations such as the African National Congress Women's League in 1943. These organisations also led to the rise of leaders such as Ray Alexander and Hilda Bernstein who would go on to shape the FEDSAW's transnational connections, before the federation was formally inaugurated in 1954.

Alexander and Bernstein, met through the CPSA, and had close ties with the WIDF. While the details of how they first got in contact with the WIDF are not recorded, the connection with the WIDF was through the common aim of fighting for international peace[101] and 'improving the status of women'.[102] The aim to fight for world peace was further reiterated with the creation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945, and alongside the WIDF's objectives, also became one of FEDSAW's aims.

These events, specifically the Cold War, impacted the kinds of organisations the FEDSAW and Black Sash would go on to interact with in the 1950s. The FEDSAW associated with organisations that were linked to their aims of world peace and international cooperation, such as the World Peace Council and the WIDF; whereas the Black Sash avoided politicised aims when networking with international organisations, and used their international networks to spread the word of their fight against apartheid. This had a direct impact on the kinds of international messages they aligned themselves with. The federation advocated for universal peace and international cooperation, whereas the Black Sash advocated fighting for justice in South Africa, and avoided aligning themselves with international political messages.

Communism as the backdrop in the 1950s set the environment for the start of transnational interactions for the FEDSAW and influenced transnational encounters. The federation inherited links with WIDF from Bernstein and Alexander, which has

[100] Louise Vincent, 'Bread and Honour: White Working Class Women and Afrikaner Nationalism in the 1930s', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26 (1) (2000), p. 61.
[101] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.5.1, FEDSAW Inaugural address, 17 April 1954.
[102] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 101.

led to speculation about the federation's link to communism. Elizabeth Armstrong claims the WIDF was linked more to communism than wanting to advance women's campaigns.[103] By contrast, Francisca de Haan questions the link between the WIDF and communism, and argues the WIDF was further politicised and stereotyped by the West based on assumptions surrounding the organisation, due to the lack of archival information about the federation.[104] Primary sources from this study confirm communism as an ideology, which advocated for common ownership in an egalitarian society for all[105] did not link the FEDSAW and WIDF, but rather they were connected by the consequence of the Second World War and Cold War, which resulted in international solidarity for the fight for international peace.

These international events affected the development of South Africa's intellectual environment and political struggle. Under the Suppression of Communism Act (1950), communism was deemed as a threat to national security and was used by the South African government to label all oppositional organisations as communist, whether they adhered to the ideology or not. This threat resulted in key oppositional leaders and organisations being formally accused of treason, and so began the Treason Trial from 1956 until 1961. This trial slowed down, and in some cases completely stopped political activities of leaders and key oppositional organisations such as the FEDSAW, ANC, SACPO and SAIC.

The fear of communism further exemplified apartheid and affected how the government treated opposition organisations, resulting in harsher apartheid laws being implement in the country. However this also, in turn, intensified the national liberation movement, uniting the oppositional organisations through creating underground anti-apartheid movements from the early 1960s onwards.

The historical backdrop in the 1950s and '60s, gives a broad scope of how global events such as the Cold War influenced the FEDSAW and Black Sash's transnational connections in terms of which organisations they associated with, such as the WIDF and World Peace Council. However it also illustrates that both organisations used their international links to highlight and address national concerns, where the South African context of apartheid was a unique situation that needed the oppositional organisation's full dedication. Therefore, FEDSAW and the

[103] Elizabeth Armstrong, 'Before Bandung: The Anti-Imperialist Women's Movement in Asia and the Women's International Democratic Federation', Signs: *Journal of Women in Culture & Society,* 41 (2) (2016), p. 314.
[104] Francisca de Haan, ''Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography of Transnational Women's Organisations: the Case of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF)'. *Women's History Review* 19 (4) (2010), p. 549.
[105] Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, p. 20.

Black Sash's fight for peace and justice was primarily focused on the South African context, however the FEDSAW in particular used their transnational connections to further support their fight against apartheid.

Methodology and sources

This thesis adopts a transnational framework, specifically to understand the links the Black Sash and FEDSAW had with the rest of the world; how this affected their own organisational development; to what extent their networks and contacts impacted the two organisations; and how this influenced their roles in the national liberation movement. As detailed above, transnationalism is a relatively new historical method and perspective, which the FEDSAW and Black Sash would not have used in the 1950s and '60s. Transnational and transnationalism are therefore used retrospectively and relate to what is described in the sources as 'international' connections and events.

Taking these concepts and definitions into account, transnationalism is defined in this study as the movement of ideas, knowledge, experience and individuals across physical boundaries, creating and contributing to existing and new networks, uniting women in solidarity. In my examination of the Black Sash and FEDSAW, this solidarity is closely linked to anti-apartheid activism, which supports how closely the transnational was linked to the national context in South Africa in the 1950s.

This framework is used in order to understand how FEDSAW and the Black Sash were structured within the liberation movement, as well as understanding women's roles in fighting against apartheid, both locally and abroad; while integrating with the international community. The transnational element also helps to understand FEDSAW and the Black Sash's shared values with the international community, and to what extent this engagement took place. The significance in this helps to place the South African women's movement in the wider international context of women's organisations and the international suffrage movement. Additionally, the transnational perspective is paramount for demonstrating the planning and networking of South African women in the pursuit of their organisational aims and motivations. It is through this networking that the Black Sash, in particular, created a

collaborative approach, and the two organisations ended up influencing each other structurally and ideologically.

Archival sources from South Africa, the UK and the Netherlands revealed the transnational nature of both organisations. This study is based on an extensive range of archival sources, including biographies and autobiographies; speeches; interviews; transcripts; written correspondence; meeting minutes; the organisation's journals, pamphlets and banned newspapers.

There are several biographies written by South African women involved in both organisations. Joseph's books *Side by Side, Tomorrow's Sun* and *If This Be Treason*, detailed her experience of apartheid through racial, class and gendered lenses, enabling the reader to understand anti-apartheid activism from beyond a race and class division. Additionally, Helen Suzman's memoir gave an insight in the fight against apartheid as the only female Member of Parliament (MP) in the South African government, shedding light on the racial and gender divisions. Similarly, Ray Alexander detailed her personal experience in fighting against apartheid as a political activist as a female worker, highlighting from a class and gender perspective, [106] while Hilda Bernstein addressed class, race and gender in understanding women during apartheid. [107] Joseph's autobiographies add further insight into how leadership functioned in FEDSAW and how the organisation was affected by apartheid.

Similarly, Alexander, a trade unionist and FEDSAW founding member, detailed her experiences in getting involved in trade unions and communism in her autobiography *All My Life and All My Strength*.[108] Alexander's focus was specifically on empowering the working and lower classes before and during apartheid, with a strong feminist undertone. Alexander's book enables readers to further understand the rationale behind creating the FEDSAW and the Women's Charter that was adopted at the Federation's inauguration.

Lilian Ngoyi's unpublished memoir was also consulted for this thesis. Ngoyi, FEDSAW president in the 1950s and leader of the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL), focused on her national and international experiences of being affiliated with both organisations and her opinions about these experiences.

[106] Ray Alexander, *All my Life and All my Strength*, South Africa (South Africa: STE Publishers, 2004), p. 148.
[107] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p 86.
[108] Alexander, *All my Life and All my Strength*, p. 150.

These personal testimonies preserve and record important insights and first hand experiences these leaders endured during the 1950s and ‘60s, such as their links to international organisations, ideological growth, and development shaped by interaction with individuals and organisations. These sources captured details and interpretations on topics that were overlooked or did not fit into the popular historiography trends of the time. The value of these experiences lies in their detachment from historiographical trends, and the ability to delve into details of events such as the creation of the Federation and protests, and first-hand experiences that shaped leaders and affected the organisation’s growth. In addition to these biographies, several archives were consulted as part of this study.

The archives whose collections were consulted include:

- The Special Collections and Historical Papers at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa
    - The Helen Joseph collection,
    - FEDSAW archives,
    - Women’s Charter
    - Freedom Charter
    - Treason Trial records
    - Women’s Enfranchisement League
    - Black Sash archives
- Manuscript department, University of Cape Town, South Africa
    - The South African Women’s Christian Temperance Union pamphlets
    - The Women’s Enfranchisement League
    - FEDSAW pamphlets
    - Black Sash Archives
- Women’s Library, London School of Economics, London
    - Women’s Enfranchisement League
    - Women’s Enfranchisement Association of the Union
- The International Institute for Social History, Netherlands
    - *Congress of Democrats* journal
    - Black Sash pamphlets
- University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa

- *Liberation* newspaper (1953-56)
- *New Age* newspaper (1954-62)
- *Contact* newspaper (1954-58)
- *Fighting Talk* newspaper (1954-62)

The Black Sash and FEDSAW's international contacts and networks have been documented in the archives, therefore contributing to the transnational analysis of these organisations in the 1950s and '60s as well as providing firm evidence that international organisations shaped and influenced them. Archival sources on earlier women's organisations such as the WCTU and the WEL, help to understand the earlier women's movement's significance and contribution to South Africa, while creating a blueprint for women's movements in racially and culturally diverse South African society. Secondary literature focuses primarily on the twentieth century women's movement, neglecting pivotal information and networks inherited from the earlier transnational women's movement, whereas this study reveals inherited contacts, which are specific individuals and organisations traced back to the UK and USA that triggered the beginning of the South African's women's movement.

Oral history is a fundamental part of this study and is an important element in understanding South African black women's history in the 1950s, as it was a means of uncovering lesser-known actors' roles in fighting for racial equality.[109] Additionally, the importance of oral history as a methodology is to support writing about women's political history,[110] further contributing to women's visibility in history.

Oral history was vital in creating and maintaining knowledge about the 1913 pass protest, which influenced future FEDSAW leaders. Lilian Ngoyi, ANCWL and FEDSAW president, worked closely with historian Julia Wells to create a study specifically discussing and recording the role of passes and the 1913 Orange Free State protest. Ngoyi's knowledge about the protest was passed on by her grandmother.[111] Ngoyi's motivation to fight against passes during apartheid in FEDSAW emerged due to a combination of oral history and environmental circumstances, where black women in the 1950s, like women in her grandmother's generation, were threatened by the minority white population with having to carry

[109] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes: Black Women's Resistance in the U.S South and South Africa*, p.32.
[110] Musiiwa, 'Frances Baard's and Helen Joseph's Struggle against Apartheid,' 1950–1963: A Comparative Analysis', *Histories* 57 (1) (2012) p. 68.
[111] Wells, *We have Done with Pleading, p.* 21.

passes. By integrating oral history methods into mainstream studies on the South African women's movement, the motives and interests of individual activists have come to the forefront.

In addition to archival research, interviews were conducted with Black Sash members who were members in 1955, some of whom have since passed away. This thesis therefore constitutes an important historical document in its own right, immortalising the experiences of as yet unheard voices from the Black Sash and their transnational understanding of the organisation. The interviews conducted came about after reading Mary Burton's book about the Black Sash, and contacting one of her colleagues to put me in touch with Sash members who were active in the organisation in the 1950s. This resulted in contacts from a small number of women who were part of the organisation since it began, who were willing to discuss their experiences with me. Diana Davis hosted the first Sash meeting in 1955 in Port Elizabeth and was involved in the organisation until the 1980s; Elizabeth Davenport joined the Sash in 1955 in the Western Cape and was involved in the organisation until 2005; and Amy Thornton, originally a member of the SACP and then the COD, worked closely with the Black Sash and FEDSAW to create CATAPAW. Mary Burton became involved in the Black Sash in 1965, and I interviewed her because of her understanding of the Sash in the 1960s, but also her extensive historical knowledge about the organisation, which incorporated archival research in her book.

These interviews gave first-hand experience and knowledge about the Sash, some of which has not been documented in the archives. The interview method itself was a one-to-one interview that consisted of open-ended questions and follow-up questions where relevant. These interviews were recorded on two devices, then transcribed for analysis.

I used a neo-positivist approach when creating the questions and conducting the interview, where interview regulations were followed in order to avoid bias, thereby approaching the work with neutrality.[112] In this sense, the 'interview conversation is a pipeline for transmitting knowledge'[113] where facts and personal experiences were discussed on the interviewees terms. The questions included a broad perspective from asking the interviewee their personal experience, as well as their perception of feminism in the Black Sash and political collaborations (national

[112] Alveson, M., 'Beyond Neopositivists, Romantics, and Localists: A Reflective Approach to Interviews in Organizational Research', *The Academy of Management Review,* 28 (1), (2003), p. 15.
[113] James Holstein and Jaber Gubrium, 'Active Interview' in *Qualitative Research,* (Sage: London, 1997), p. 113.

and international). These questions were deliberately chosen to cover a wide range of topics as I wanted to capture the interviewees experiences as well their knowledge about the national and transnational functions of the Sash.

I have used these interviews to further support information found in the archives, as well as to get clarity on information that has not been stated but rather implied, in the archives. For example, the question about feminism and its links to the Black Sash was unclear in the archives, however being able to interview and get clarity on this from Black Sash members themselves, helped to confirm the organisation's stance to the ideology in the 1950s and '60s.

There was of course also a critical element of interpreting information from the interviews as fact and certain aspects to these interviews needed to be handled with caution. As with any first-hand oral evidence, it is advisable to check and verify facts with other sources from the period. As a scholar, one questions the accuracy of recollections and whether memories have been romanticised.[114] As a scholar, I was conscious of the role of memory and nostalgia, and whether this would possibly influence how the interviewees remembered and interpreted the past. To overcome this, I cross-referenced information found in my primary sources in the archives and preparation for the interviews, with the first hand experiences that emerged in the interviews. I used my historical judgement based on my archival and historical knowledge, to assess what was said and whether it was historically factual, or potentially sensationalised.

It is important to understand that there is some information interviewees do not want to discuss. This situation allows for the possibility of peripheral questions-querying around the main question itself. In one of the interviews conducted, the interviewee denied being linked to and working with the FEDSAW or the Black Sash, despite primary sources detailing they were key in bringing the two organisations together to fight against apartheid and specifically passes. Despite denying any involvement with the Black Sash and FEDSAW, I appealed to their sociable personality and decided to ask more indirect questions, such as whether they have ever socialised with or knew political comrades such as the Black Sash president, Eulalie Stott or FEDSAW president Lilian Ngoyi. This question opened a full conversation of how closely the interviewee was connected to the FEDSAW, and

[114] Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson, *The Oral History Reader*. UK: Routledge, 2015.

how they gave Ngoyi their passport to sneak out of South Africa in 1955 the first time by ship, to attend the Congress of Mothers. This demonstrates that during the interview process itself, candidates may not want to disclose certain information openly, and it is imperative that the interviewer uses their judgement to assess how to make the interviewee comfortable enough to discuss their experiences, while also using historical knowledge acquired from primary sources as a compass to direct the conversation.

Unfortunately no FEDSAW members were interviewed, as there are very few members who are still alive from 1954, and those who are alive were unavailable for interviews. An interview with Sophia Williams De Bruyn from SACPO was used from a previous study; she was actively involved in FEDSAW and was one of the leaders in the 9 August 1956 women's march.

In addition to the interviews conducted, this study also analysed pre-recorded interviews from documentaries and other research. These includes Cassandra Parker's documentary on the Black Sash's history, and Ruendree Govinder's interviews as part of the 'Overcoming Apartheid, Building Democracy' project. These documentaries and interviews helped in understanding already deceased Sash leader's perspectives on the organisation in the 1950s and '60s. Additionally, they gave valuable insight into previous president's Jean Sinclair and Eulalie Stott's experiences against apartheid, leading the organisation and their personal experiences of being part of the national liberation movement.

Combined, the archival and oral sources further facilitate investigation and analysis of the Black Sash and FEDSAW in detail, understanding their origins; goals; strategies; and impact on transnational networks in South Africa between 1952 and 1962. This methodology produces a unique and original analysis of these organisations, helping to further understand their nature, structure and how they responded to the domestic environment– as well as their communication and collaboration with overseas individuals and organisations.

Outline of the chapters

What follows is the first transnational history of the FEDSAW and Black Sash. Chapter One outlines the blueprint for the South African transnational women's movement in the 1950s and '60s, by identifying and analysing the main attributes

from the earlier women's movement that would continue in the 1950s and '60s, focusing on broader themes such as women's suffrage, the role of education and racial equality. These issues created a bridge between South African women and international women's organisations. In so doing, this chapter argues that transnationalism helped create a foundation for the South African women's political movement, that would go on to inspire and form the FEDSAW and Black Sash.

Chapter Two further connects the earlier South African women's movement and the emergence of FEDSAW and the Black Sash in the 1950s, through specific events, organisations, individuals and issues. Both organisations drew inspiration from and continued the transnational influence started by the earlier women's movement. This chapter argues the FEDSAW and the Black Sash were inspired by specific individuals from the earlier women's movement such as Olive Schreiner and Daisy Solomon, and organisations that would go on to fight against racial inequality such as the Springbok Legion and Defiance Campaign.

Chapter Three examines the active years of both organisations from 1954 until 1962 and explores their aims and the evolution of their ideologies; what the organisations protested about; how they fitted in with anti-apartheid activism and the national liberation struggle as well as who the key figures were that shaped these organisations. Evidence of the Black Sash and FEDSAW's ideological development will be drawn from documents such as the Women's Charter, Freedom Charter and UDHR. This chapter argues that both organisations' ideological developments shaped how they interacted transnationally and aligned themselves with international organisations.

Chapter Four explores the FEDSAW's little known and analysed transnational links. Soon after its creation, the Federation expanded its influence abroad by sending delegates to conferences and representing South African women on an international stage. This chapter contributes to the Federation's rarely studied transnational connections and argues the FEDSAW's transnational and international links were intentional and strategic, and were part of their aims since inception where they deliberately aligned themselves with specific international organisations, networked with key figures and took part in well-chosen international events.

Chapter Five unpacks the Black Sash's transnational connections, which occurred later in their existence, as they tried to figure out who they were and how they contributed to the fight against apartheid. Unlike the FEDSAW, transnationalism

was not a strategic aim, nor was it a priority for the Black Sash. Religion and human rights were the main themes that connected the Sash transnationally and this occurred in different periods during the Sash's development. Transnationalism for the Sash was based on class and privilege, rather than ideological similarities.

The final chapter, followed by a conclusion, evaluates the FEDSAW and Black Sash's impact and argues transnationalism directly influenced the organisations' leaders to become more integrated and involved in anti-apartheid activism. It does this through addressing the role of leaders and events in the 1950s and '60s after international connections were made. This includes events such as the Treason Trial, CATAPAW and the Sharpeville Massacre.

Overall, by questioning the Black Sash and FEDSAW's role in South Africa and understanding their transnational connections, this thesis is an original contribution and introduces a new perspective in South African women's history, on the impact these organisations had within South African politics and the transnational women's movement in the 1950s and '60s. Thereby this thesis argues transnationalism was central to the Black Sash and FEDSAW, as it helped reaffirm their role in anti-apartheid activism, clarified their objectives and aims, and solidified women's contribution to national and international discussions about human rights.

Chapter 1 : The transnational origins of the Black Sash and FEDSAW

Introduction

The transnationalism of the FEDSAW and the Black Sash has its origins in the earlier South African women's movement, between 1889 and 1913. The earlier women's movement, most notably the WCTU and IWSA, was transnational in the sense that the organisations participated in international tours and the exchange of information and knowledge at international events and conferences. These activities connected the earlier South African English-speaking, white women's organisations to global debates such as female enfranchisement, extending their interest and influence beyond domestic issues, thereby creating South Africa's own transnational women's movement.

This chapter outlines the origins of the South African transnational women's movement. This includes the South African WCTU, WEL and WEAU engagement with international female enfranchisement; the use of education to help unite women from various countries and create support through solidarity thereby furthering their organisational aims; the effects of race on their transnational development; and the rise and role of transnational South African women leaders, who had increased international awareness and a strong presence in national and political activism.

This research builds on the limited historiography on South African women's transnational links and argues that the earlier South African white women's movement, from 1889 until 1913, was built on transnationalism and created a blueprint for the FEDSAW and Black Sash in the 1950s and '60s. My work builds on existing scholarship that depicts South African English-speaking, white women's organisations as intrinsically connected to an international community. Deborah Gaitskell's transnational research links WEL in South Africa to the UK[1], Cherryl Walker's study assists in understanding the origins of the South African women's movement from a historical perspective and narrative[2], Pamela Scully and Pamela Brooks' research compares the USA and South Africa's racial components in light of

[1] Gaitskell, 'The Imperial Tie', p. 3.
[2] Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, p. 59.

women's suffrage,[3] Ian Fletcher, Philippa Levine and Laura Nym's study on comparing women's suffrage within the British empire; and Ian Tyrrell's book explores the WCTU's international perspective.[4] All these studies have a specific focus on suffrage as the bridge between South African and international women's organisations. Suffrage as an international theme connected the earlier South African women's movement to the international community, and raises debates about the nature and function of English-speaking, middle to upper class South African white women's organisations, such as whether they fought for women's rights or broader human rights and injustices. This is significant as debates about women's rights and human rights re-emerge in the 1950s and '60s with the FEDSAW and Black Sash.

This study contributes to the current literature by addressing and exploring transnationalism of the earlier South African women's movement, which created a foundation for the later transnationalism of FEDSAW and Black Sash.

This chapter analyses the role of transnationalism in setting up South Africa's transnational women's movement through exploring how the women's organisations interacted with enfranchisement as an international theme, how transnationalism was spread through education, the impact race had on South African women's organisations and their participation internationally, and the rise of transnational South African women leaders, which created generations of politically active South African women who understood the importance of communicating and cooperating with the international community in achieving their organisational aims at a national level. In doing so, this chapter argues transnationalism was central in the earlier South African women's movement and created a blueprint for the later South African multi-racial and multi-lingual women's organisations such as the Black Sash and FEDSAW.

The emergence of the South African transnational women's movement

In the 1950s, the FEDSAW and Black Sash had international networks and represented South Africa overseas at various events, and while international

[3] Scully, *White Maternity and Black Childhood*, p. 69. and Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes: Black Women's Resistance in the U.S South and South Africa*, p.45.
[4] Fletcher, Levine, and Nym, *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire*, p. 70.

connections were not the FEDSAW and the Black Sash's main focus, South African women's organisations' links with the rest of the world were not a new phenomenon. The international connections in the earlier women's movement were reinforced through international tours, engaging with global issues such as enfranchisement and associating with specific, like-minded organisations. International excursions organised by women's organisations first took place in South Africa by the WCTU as a way of promoting organisational aims, increasing support and expanding their influence. The temperance union, created in the USA in 1873, aimed to create a pure society and abolish liquor.[5] The union was described as a religious organisation of teetotallers that promoted women's suffrage[6] and was linked to the moral reform movement.[7] This enabled women to create an organisation which allowed them to be proactive and was an outlet for women's social and political participation in the community.

The earlier South African transnational women's movement was triggered by the WCTU's international tour that started in 1884 in Natal. By 1889, the South African WCTU branch was created and was the 'first organised Women's Society' in the Cape colony,[8] created because of an international tour organised by Mary Leavitt, an American WCTU member.[9] Leavitt promoted the temperance union and tried to increase its membership and international influence through her trip. Importantly, these international tours allowed South African black and white women to observe and be educated on what was happening in other countries such as suffrage in the USA and UK. The temperance union empowered and enabled South African English-speaking, white women to become part of the international dialogue about women's suffrage and encouraged 'information exchange' [10] where experiences, contexts and knowledge were exchanged. This exchange led to current scholars labelling the WCTU as one of the largest transnational women's movements,[11] as it was engaged in dialogue between women from all over the world

[5] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP178.06 WOM, Pamphlet, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Cape Province: Golden Jubilee 1889–1939, 1939, p. 2.
[6] Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation,* p. 118.
[7] Ibid., p. 151.
[8] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP178.06, Pamphlet, *Women's Christian Temperance Union, Cape Province: Golden Jubilee 1889–1939*, 1939.
[9] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives, Special Collections, Reference: BC597, Article: *South African Outlook*, 1 May 1939, p. 116.
[10] Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation,* p.151.
[11] Rosenberg, *Transnational Currents in a Shrinking World 1870–1945*, p. 80.

and encouraged women to question their role in society[12] and become proactive for change.

International tours created networking opportunities between South African women and foreigners, encouraging the exchange of experiences and knowledge. This information exchange took place in two ways. Initially, foreigners and their associated organisations went to South Africa to gain support, followed by overseas trips where South African women and their affiliated organisations shared what was happening in South Africa and gained support for their cause. The extent of WCTU members' travels abroad was detailed in WCTU Cape President Emilie Solomon's biography where she travelled to the UK, Canada, Italy and Switzerland.[13] Tours planned by white women's organisations during the early twentieth century demonstrated that international connections were made early in their existence, and illustrated the intricacy of the planning, networking and mobility of the women's movement and how at that time it was international in nature.

These exchanges slowly gave politically active South African women confidence to speak up about their personal experience in the South African context, and the challenges women and men faced in the country compared to other parts in the world. It also allowed women's organisations such as the WCTU to find any gaps or areas to address and further expand their influence. For example, the WCTU went on to further focus and expand their international network and created the World WCTU (WWCTU) in 1883,[14] which was later established in the Cape colony in 1903.[15] The WWCTU aimed to create a stronger international network and in doing so it became a founding member of the International Council of Women (ICW) in 1893 and was also made a charter member of the United Nations Non-Governmental Organisations in 1945.[16] Having South African representation in the WWCTU further increased South African women's exposure to the plight of the international women's movement while creating an opportunity to discuss the country's struggles abroad. It was in this context that individuals such as Emilie

[12] Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation,* p. 110.
[13] John Carson, *Emilie Solomon, 1858–1939* (Johannesburg: Juta and Co, 1941), p. 82.
[14] World Women's Christian Temperance Union, 'WWCTU beginnings', October 2014, (available at http://www.wwctu.com/pages/history.html as accessed on 10 April 2015).
[15] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP178 WHIT, Pamphlet, The White Ribbon, December 1989,p. 64.
[16] World Women's Christian Temperance Union, 'WWCTU beginnings', October 2014, (available at http://www.wwctu.com/pages/history.html as accessed on 10 April 2015).

Solomon created influential and important contacts for the further development of the South African transnational women's movement.

International tours continued to play an important role in developing the transnational women's movement in the twentieth century. The IWSA president Carrie Chapman Catt, from the USA, and vice-president Dr Aletta Jacobs, from the Netherlands, started their international tour in Cape Town in June 1911 before travelling through the rest of South Africa. In her memoir, Jacobs spoke about the many women's suffrage organisations in Cape Town[17] and she met women representing the WEL, Christian unions such as the WCTU and other organisations such as the Women's Citizen Club.[18] Some of the women Jacobs met and socialised with on this tour included Lady Rose-Innes and Lady De Villiers from the WEAU, Olive Schreiner from the WEL Cape branch and Emily Macintosh from the WCTU and WEAU. These women were already prominent leaders in South Africa, whose presence signified the importance of the event for networking with domestic and international organisations. This event was an opportunity to further build one's networks and be part of a historical event that was the international tour. The tour led to the IWSA being labelled as one of the largest transnational women's movements[19] in the twentieth century. The tour's aims were to form a movement and create a support system where women united to fight for women's rights such as suffrage through solidarity.

The IWSA's international tour to South Africa was criticised as being a one-way discussion, with the IWSA dictating how women should respond to domestic issues. The tour did not broaden the minds of all leaders,[20] especially concerning the specific struggles women faced in South Africa. This tour was rushed, leaving participants with little time to experience and understand the local issues and build on this knowledge. Therefore, the purpose of the excursion was in IWSA's interest where their organisation was promoted and they could network and support, rather than helping South African women create organisations to solve South African issues.

International tours influenced South African organisations and leaders to create networks with international organisations such as the WCTU and IWSA and

[17] Aletta Jacobs, *Travel Letters from Africa to Asia* (Holland, W. Hilarius Wzn, 1915), p. 86.
[18] Jacobs, *Travel Letters from* Africa, p. 88.
[19] Rosenberg, *Transnational Currents in a Shrinking World 1870-1945*, p. 80.
[20] Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation,* p. 113.

key individuals such as Catt and Jacob. They also enabled South African white, middle to upper class women to engage in a dialogue about wider struggles such as suffrage and race.

The early women's movement and issue of enfranchisement

The fight for female enfranchisement connected the earlier South African women's movement to other international women's organisations, in a context where South African women regardless of race, did not have the vote. The WCTU responded to suffrage by creating their franchise department in 1893 in Cape Town; this was the first department in the country dedicated to women's votes and rights. The temperance union believed women should be more politically active in order to improve society and achieve their aim to alleviate issues such as the impact of alcohol in society.[21] The franchise department was based on the structure of the WCTU in the USA,[22] and responded directly to the South African and international environment where women wanted equal voting rights to men.

The temperance union motivated women to question their political rights and in doing so, inspired the creation of other women's organisations. In 1902, English emigrants based in the Natal colony created the WEL, which spread throughout the country with its most popular branch being the Cape colony, created in 1907. The link between the WCTU and WEL's Cape branch is evident through its founding members. Forty WCTU members in Cape Town, including Julia Solly, Emilie Solomon and Mary Brown, created WEL's Cape branch.[23] This is significant as the WCTU was used as a model to create the league and was established by like-minded women who had similar viewpoints and perspectives about women's roles in society and the importance of international connections with other organisations.

The South African temperance union was based on the USA structure and played a significant role in establishing the women's movement in South Africa in1889, as it created a prototype that future organisations could adopt and adjust accordingly, while also encouraging women to become politically active. A fundamental part of creating social movements and spreading transnationalism, is

[21] Rosenberg, *Transnational Currents in a Shrinking World 1870–1945*, p. 80.
[22] *Tyrrell, Women and Temperance in International Perspective*, p. 223.
[23] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC597, Article: South African Outlook, 1 May 1939, p. 117.

replicating the same structures and models abroad.[24] This was done in South Africa by educating and encouraging a new generation of women who would later politically and socially define women's roles in the country. The WCTU's Golden Jubilee pamphlet took credit for this and stated they were 'the pioneer society in starting to work for Women's Suffrage'.[25] Referring to themselves as the pioneers implies they were the first to have done this and were the founders of this new movement in the country.

The temperance union believed that as a result of 'our work', the WEL in the Cape was formed in 1907.[26] The league was the first organisation to be solely dedicated to suffrage, with aims 'to promote an intelligent interest in the question of Political Enfranchisement of Women in Cape Colony and to advocate the granting of the Vote of Women on the same terms as men'.[27] The WEL recognised the importance of the WCTU by claiming in its Victory publication of the *Flashlight*, that 'suffrage had been affiliated to the Cape Province WEL through WCTU'.[28] Therefore WEL could learn about operational issues such as structure and planning from the WCTU, as well as how the union approached political issues related to women's rights.

With this in mind, it is not surprising South African women looked to the US women's movement to understand what was happening internationally. The international suffrage movement, specifically in the USA, was linked to a reformist approach such as anti-slavery and temperance.[29] By being linked to this perspective, women's organisations would be taken more seriously they were connected to wider issues in society. However by the twentieth century, South African women started working with organisations that were created for the sole purpose of suffrage.

South African women also looked to the UK women's movement as an example, to understand the different issues being addressed and the tactics used to protest against issues they experienced. They read colonial newspapers reporting

[24] Markoff, *Waves of Democracy,* p. 34
[25] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP178.06 WOM, Pamphlet, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Cape Province: Golden Jubilee 1889–1939, 1939, p. 2.
[26] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP178.06 WOM, Pamphlet, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Cape Province: Golden Jubilee 1889–1939, 1939, p. 3.
[27] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35, Pamphlet, *Women's Enfranchisement League: Our Claim for Enfranchisement– Cape Colony*, 1912, p. 1.
[28] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A133, Pamphlet: Flashlight– Victory Number, 1930, p. 28.
[29] Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, p. 4.

what their British counterparts were protesting about.[30] This meant that educated, literate South African women were more exposed to knowing what was happening overseas, such as the UK women's fight for votes. Knowledge spread through publications, spreading ideas and women's first-hand experiences.

The WSPU campaigns influenced the WCTU and WEL in South Africa. Compared to the UK, South Africa's women's activism was timid and conservative.[31] The South African women's movement before 1914, was described by anti-apartheid activist, Hilda Bernstein as 'white suffragettes inspired by their British sisters',[32] highlighting that white South African women in particular were aware of what their British counterparts were doing for women's rights. While this was an inspiration and a model for South African women to look up to, some South African white women's organisations made suffrage an aim for themselves too, indicating that they were becoming part of a wider international women's movement. Additionally, the WCTU and WEL connected South Africa to the rest of the world through fighting for universal suffrage and linking the country to the first wave of feminism where suffrage was the main concern. South African newspapers, specifically those in Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State, published the on-going movements of the WSPU, women's suffrage and their activities of resistance.[33] As women became more politically active in a changing context, the WSPU was a more radical and modern example to follow by the twentieth century, encouraging women to learn and adapt from their political activities. There has been speculation that the Johannesburg WEL was modelled on the British suffrage societies.[34] Archival materials have not been found to further support this claim.

Through reading about suffrage in the UK, South African white and black women related to British women fighting for the vote. The absence of women's enfranchisement in both countries acted as a common theme that bound them on equal terms. There is evidence that newspapers in the Orange Free State, such as *The Friend of the Sovereignty and Bloemfontein Gazette*, published stories about the British suffragettes and their fight for the vote in the UK, leaving historians to speculate that this might have encouraged other political activity in South Africa by

[30] C.J Walker, *Women in Twentieth Century South African Politics: Its Roots, Growth and Decline.* (Unpublished thesis, 1978), p. 24.
[31] M Fedden, St Joan's Social and Political Alliance 'Impressions of an Overseas Visitor' *WEAU Occasional Paper,* October 1926.
[32] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 83.
[33] Wells, *We have Done with Pleading, p.* 21.
[34] Louise Haysom, 'Olive Schreiner and the Women's Vote', *Search Light South Africa*, 3(3) (1993), p. 31.

women.[35] The articles on British suffragettes published in these newspapers left a rough model for South African women to follow.

Women's enfranchisement in South Africa

The international campaign for women's suffrage connected the earlier South African women to the rest of the world although, women's suffrage in South Africa was not the dominant concern at the end of the nineteenth century and there was clear opposition to women's enfranchisement. John X. Merriman, a politician in the South African Party (SAP) and later the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from 1908–1910, was not convinced South African women should be enfranchised. Within parliamentary debates, Merriman openly opposed women's enfranchisement by stating 'Women's counsel and brandy are two capital things, but you must use them very cautiously'.[36] These comments were received with laughter and cheers in parliament,[37] demonstrating how little politicians thought of women's potential participation in politics and them getting the vote. Despite being pessimistic about women's enfranchisement, Merriman brought attention to the subject, and it was subsequently recorded in the Cape parliamentary debates, that South African women, as early as in the 1890s, were already beginning to question and challenge their political and social rights in the country.[38] It is unclear whether this is directly related to the WCTU's franchise department, however there could be a correlation where the franchise department brought women's enfranchisement to the forefront of political debate.

By the early twentieth century, enfranchisement became increasingly important for women in the South African context for multiple reasons. Firstly, black men in the Cape colony were legally permitted to vote, depending on the status of their education and property portfolio, unlike black men in Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal who did not have the right to vote at all due to their race. White women, on the other hand, did not have the right to vote, illustrating that the question of enfranchisement in the Cape colony was based on gender rather than

[35] Wells, *We have Done with Pleading, p.* 22.
[36] Cape House of Assembly Debates, 1892, 252, cited in Walker, *Women in Twentieth Century South African Politics,* p. 24.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

race. This re-emphasised the subordinate political role women played in South Africa, where no women, regardless of their race, had the right to vote.

South African women's lack of political representation would eventually become part of a political motive to further separate the races. The women's suffrage debate in South Africa continued into the 1920s, and national politics dictated the growth and direction of the WEAU and the wider women's movement. South African politicians understood the international debates of women fighting for votes and questioned why South Africa was lagging behind this trend. Internationally, there was additional pressure placed on South Africa for women's enfranchisement. Women were being granted the vote abroad, proving that women's enfranchisement was not as risky as the National Party (NP) government might have believed.[39] If fellow Commonwealth countries took the decision to grant women the vote, there would be an expectation for South Africa to follow suit. New Zealand and Australian women attained the vote in 1893 and 1902 respectively, while British women were becoming increasingly active in the fight for women's enfranchisement.

South African white women challenged local politicians to keep up with international female suffrage politics. By 1920, the SAP affiliated themselves with women's organisations supporting votes for women.[40] Jan Smuts, SAP leader and South African prime minister from 1919–1924 and 1939–1948, believed this would eventually happen as women overseas were starting to get the vote.[41] A member of parliament, General John Byron, also questioned why South Africa was lagging behind internationally regarding women's suffrage,[42] understanding there was a wider trend about women's enfranchisement that went beyond South Africa's conservative and restrictive racial policies. In the 1923 parliamentary debate, General Byron, who supported women's suffrage, questioned why the Afrikaans women were not granted the vote they had been promised as far back as 1843, for their help during the Great Trek.[43] This reinstated the false promises of the women's vote and its on-going debate in politics.

Despite this, the government did not support women's enfranchisement and made this explicitly clear in parliamentary debates with speakers such as Merriman,

[39] C Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa* (South Africa: University of Cape Town, 1979), p. 22.
[40] Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, p. 326.
[41] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference A133, 1.3, Vol. 2 1917–30: The Star, 'Women's Suffrage – Parliamentary debate'.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

who continued to voice his disapproval about women's suffrage in the 1920s. Merriman was recorded as stating in parliament in 1923, 'Would women's suffrage bring a new heaven and new earth? No, rather a new hell'.[44] Merriman believed women's suffrage would add further confusion to an already complicated political arena. He questioned the role of feminism and what good it brought to countries such as England and Russia, concluding that this was a kind of revolution that was, from his perspective, secondary in importance to the 'native question'.[45] The native question referred to the roles and rights of non-whites in South African society, again reiterating that race was more politically significant, compared to gender related issues such as enfranchisement.

This would change when the NP needed to increase its electoral support. In 1930, the Women's Enfranchisement Bill was passed when James Hertzog, South African prime minister from 1924–1939, claimed white women were suddenly 'qualified' to get the vote. This Bill stated that white women across the Union had the right to vote. While this piece of legislation helped answer the question of the women's vote, it also helped answer Hertzog's 'native question'.[46] In the 1924 debates, Hertzog stated that the black voting issue needed to be dealt with before white women could get the vote.[47] Consequently, there was a clearer separation between white women and non-European (Black, Coloured and Indian) women, therefore increasing the influence of the white vote and lowering that of the non-European vote.[48] The result was that in 1929, black voters in the Cape consisted of 20% of the Cape electorate, and dropped to 11% in 1931 after the Women's Enfranchisement Bill was introduced, meaning nationally black people's vote constituted just 5% of the national vote.[49] The Bill was therefore created to strategically help the NP gain further control over South Africa's voting system in order to facilitate the implementation of racial legislation, rather than adhering to international trends in the international women's suffrage movement. South African women got the vote due to domestic political strategy, not transnational connections or international pressure.

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[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, p. 336.
[47] Ibid., p. 335.
[48] 'Farewell to Mission Schools' Titshala, *Liberation Journal*, 8 June 1954, p. 5.
[49] Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945,* p. 313.

Olive Schreiner, a prominent WEL leader, international author and women's activist, was pro-multiracial women's enfranchisement, and foresaw an ulterior political motive should women get the vote. The South African women's movement was an on-going concern for Schreiner and she was conscious that women's enfranchisement would not be for the benefit of South African women but rather beneficial for political parties.[50] In her letter to Ruth Alexander in 1912, Schreiner reiterated that she left WEL because the terms, in which she joined the league that represented all women in the Cape colony, were no longer applicable.[51] Schreiner was ahead of her time in understanding women's progression, but she also had a profound understanding of politics and how it worked in a racially and culturally diverse environment such as South Africa.

Unfortunately, Schreiner passed away before the Women's Enfranchisement Bill was passed, but her husband William Cronwright-Schreiner believed she would have rejected the bill:

> She would have condemned it, as she always condemned any legislation which tended to disenfranchisement on sex or race lines. This being the case I trust you will not in any way associate her name with the victory celebration.[52]

The Women's Enfranchisement Bill was intrinsically related to racial ideologies and politics in the early twentieth century, something that Schreiner opposed.

Similarly, the WCTU was supportive of all South African women having the vote regardless of race. South African born Emilie Solomon, the Vice President of the World WCTU from 1925 until 1931, stated in a speech in 1936:

> We had always worked for this reform in the hope it would be granted to women without the distinction of race or colour, and a great deal of the joy of victory was taken away by the way in which the vote was given.[53]

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[50] First and Scott, *Olive Schreiner*, p. 261.
[51] National Library of South Africa, Special Collections, Cape Town, Reference: MSC 26/2.1.29, Correspondence from Olive Schreiner to Ruth Alexander, January 1912.
[52] Cronwright-Schreiner, Flashlight, July 1930 in Haysom, 'Olive Schreiner and the Women's Vote', p. 32.
[53] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP178, Emilie Solomon, Opening Address: 46th Convention of the Cape Province of the WCTU. 1935, Port Elizabeth.

This speech was delivered in a context where white women already had the vote, and as a result of its lack of inclusiveness, racial policies influenced how the South African women's movement would develop as well as the emergence of women leaders who were actively against racial segregation. Both Solomon and Schreiner were prominent leaders in the earlier South African transnational women's movement, openly opposing the government's motives behind granting only white women the vote, making female voting a political motive rather than promoting equality. They personified opposition to South African racial politics and were the international link to the rest of the world being the earliest women activists for human rights where they believed race was not the deciding factor behind one's quality of life. By the 1950s, the Black Sash used their electoral rights as white women as justification for their exclusively white membership criteria, believing they had more power as white women to fight against apartheid, as opposed to non-white women.

Spreading transnational influence through education

Education, through publications and guest speakers, was key in expanding the impact of transnationalism and formed part of the foundation of the transnational women's movement in South Africa. In order to increase international awareness, news from global networks and tours was published in the WCTU's publication, *The White Ribbon*, as a way of updating international members on issues such as suffrage as well as their protests and demonstrations. Locally, the WCTU protested through writing up petitions and handing these to senior members of society. The earliest petition the WCTU submitted was in 1892[54] and was concerned with the consent age of drinking, which resulted in the age being increased from 10 years old in 1892 to 16 years old in 1916,[55] restating the organisation's aim to preserve the purity of society and advocating against alcohol and calling for its limited use.[56] This illustrated that women had assumed the role of preserving the moral wellbeing of the youth in society and therefore took on a more maternal, passive role while political activities such as suffrage were a secondary aim in the WCTU.

[54] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP178.06 WOM, Pamphlet, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Cape Province: Golden Jubilee 1889–1939, 1939,p. 1.
[55] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP178.SOL, Speech, Emilie Solomon (WCTU leader) Opening Address: 46th Convention of the Cape Province of the WCTU, Port Elizabeth. October 1935.
[56] Carson, *Emilie Solomon,* p. 54.

The WCTU's journals and pamphlets also educated members about other women's organisations and demonstrated the temperance union's willingness to work with Coloured women's organisations. In 1911, a meeting with Coloured women organised by the Wesleyan church, was reported to the South African WCTU convention. This lead to the WCTU wanting to work alongside Coloured women and extended 'a right hand of fellowship and welcome to the Coloured women banding themselves under our banner…who are upholding Christian life and its ideals of purity and integrity in South Africa'[57] In addition to discussing collaborations between the WCTU and the Coloured women, local unions such as the Coloured Union, was documented as well as information about prominent figures in these unions such as Anna Temp (also known as Sister Nannie), who was the Superintendent of prison work and was described as a 'legend in her life time'.[58] This gave valuable insight into the local women's unions such as how and where they were organised. If this had not been documented and recorded in the WCTU's publications, these unions and organisations might have been unknown in history. The specific areas and towns that had set up unions such as Stellenbosch, Cape Town, Paarl, Wynberg and so forth,[59] illustrated that the movement was widespread in the Cape colony but there was also demand from other communities for WCTU branches to be established, demonstrating just how widespread and organised the temperance union was.

However, publications appealed to a limited number of women who were educated and literate. Like most politically active organisations, WEL was elitist in nature as membership was for educated, middle to upper class white women, who were well read and conscious of what was happening overseas. The 1912 WEL publication demonstrated how well informed women in the organisation were as detailed reference was made to women's plight in Australia and New Zealand,[60] so members were aware of what was happening in fellow Commonwealth countries and were able to learn about their fight for suffrage. Therefore, publications helped forge international links in the early twentieth century but also reinforced class divisions between the educated and uneducated.

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[57] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP178 WHIT, Pamphlet; E, Achilles, 'History of the WCTU Cape', The White Ribbon, December 1989, p. 72.
[58] Ibid.
[59] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP178 WHIT, Pamphlet; E, Achilles, 'History of the WCTU Cape', The White Ribbon, December 1989, p. 73.
[60] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35, Pamphlet, *Women's Enfranchisement League: Our Claim for Enfranchisement– Cape Colony*, 1912, p. 3.

WEL's connection to the UK is also evident in the literature. There was an indication of members' intellectual development in the league, with reference made to work by Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Fry and John Stuart Mill.[61] Mill's concepts of women and men's equal rights and the equal right to vote,[62] were discussed in detail in one of the WEL's pamphlets, reiterating that in order for a country to be represented, it is only fair that all its citizens– men and women– use that vote to be fairly represented.[63] Through these theoretical works, the above reasons further justified why the women's vote was needed not only in the UK but also in South Africa. Additionally, Schreiner was asked to write an introduction for the Walter Scott edition of Wollstonecraft's book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.[64] This introduction was never published and the draft has never been seen, however the request for this introduction signifies the impact and influence of Wollstonecraft's book that questioned women's rights and women's roles in society. Therefore, it was not only the exposure of protests in newspapers that influenced South African women, but also the migration of ideas about women's rights through literature published a century earlier.

Additionally, the WEAU published several pamphlets about the international women's movement demonstrating they were conscious of what was happening overseas. One such document was titled the 'Combined Suffrage Bodies in the Union of South Africa', where a detailed list of the suffrage calendar was published. This detailed which countries had women's suffrage in 1920 as well as the kinds of votes women had, such as whether they were municipal or national.[65] The WEAU occasional papers also published information on events related to the international women's movement such as the IWSA congress in Rome in 1923**,** as well as South Africa's involvement in these events. South African representatives at the 1923 IWSA congress included WEAU's Dr Petronella Van Heerden and Lady Rose- Innes, further confirming engagement between South African and international women's organisations.

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[61] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35, Article, Julia Solly (WEL leader), 'Growth of an Idea', Women's Enfranchisement League: Our Claim for Enfranchisement– Cape Colony, 1912, p. 41.
[62] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35, Pamphlet, Women's Enfranchisement League: Our Claim for Enfranchisement—Cape Colony, 1912, p. 31.
[63] Ibid., p. 32.
[64] Olive Schreiner, *Oliver Schreiner Letters Online*, Economic and Social Research Council, 2012, https://www.oliveschreiner.org/vre?view=collections&colid=137&letterid=270 accessed 14 January 2014.
[65] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC1129, Pamphlet, Combined Suffrage Bodies in the Union of South Africa, 1920, p. 4.

Further connections with the international women's movement and organisations were evident in their publication *Flashlight* through congratulatory messages from other women's organisations around the world[66] when white women got the vote in South Africa in 1930. These organisations included the Women's Freedom League of Great Britain, the British Commonwealth League and Saint Joan's Social and Political Alliance.[67] There was also information related to the IWSA published in *Flashlight*, confirming South African women were conscious of what was happening with the development of international women's suffrage at the time, and were eager to use this trend to their advantage and as leverage for their own agenda of fighting for women's votes in South Africa.[68]

Using their international connections, the WEAU also published articles from foreigners visiting the country in their journal. One visitor in particular, Marguerite Fedden from Saint Joan's Social and Political Alliance in the UK, labelled the South African women's movement as being confined to a 'few intellectuals and progressives',[69] assuming its infancy compared to that in the UK. Compared to the USA, Australia, UK and New Zealand, South Africa joined the women's movement two decades later and fought over more issues than votes such as racial equality.

What was most striking about Fedden's observation was her response to South Africa's political system. Fedden had the same stance as the IWSA's President, Catt, in which WEAU members should stay clear of the political issues and focus solely on getting the white women's vote.[70] Unlike Catt, Fedden came from a context where racial division was not a dominant issue compared to the USA or South Africa. However, her advice as a leader from an international context reinforced Catt's belief and further justified the WEAU's decision to fight solely for white women's votes. What is striking about this perspective is how votes were not seen as politicised when, in reality, votes were a political issue, even if it was to a lesser extent compared to race. Publications inspired protests and demonstrations by spreading the word of women's plight. Large protests organised and participated in by women fighting for suffrage took place in the UK and USA by 1913.

[66] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A133, Pamphlet: Flashlight– Victory Number, 1930, p. 36.
[67] Ibid., p. 38.
[68] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A133, Pamphlet: Flashlight, April 1930, p. 28.
[69] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35, Occasional Paper, Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union 1926, p. 5.
[70] Ibid., p. 6.

In the same year, South African women in the Orange Free State were protesting against passes. Also known as reference books, passes were a form of identification. This was a system designed to limit black people's mobility and control the flow of labour, which had the potential to threaten their overall physical and financial wellbeing. They could be separated from their families at any stage or lose their jobs completely because they were imprisoned. Police could stop a black person at any time, and should they not have their passes with them, they would be prosecuted immediately, normally by imprisonment. It is unclear whether the international protests of 1913 had a direct impact on the protests that took place in South Africa in 1913, however there is evidence that South African women read about the women's protests in the USA and UK, and word about the fight for enfranchisement was wide spread. The Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association, who organised the 1913 pass protest, were labelled as the 'local suffragettes' by *The Friend of the Sovereignty and Bloemfontein Gazette* newspaper in 1913[71] and there were also reports protesters shouted for the women's votes. This encouraged South African women to organise themselves politically but also added pressure in domestic politics to recognise that there was not only an increase in women's political activism internationally, but women were being granted the vote in more countries.

In addition to publications, some women's organisations also offered legal advice to those vulnerable in society. The WEAU adopted an educational stance in their mission and were concerned about the legal status of women. De Villiers published a booklet that was available to the WEAU stating the important facts about the legal status of women in the Cape Province. This booklet made it clear that due to the Dutch-Roman law of the Union of South Africa, there was no distinction made between men and women but rather between public and political law.[72] The WEAU could use this kind of knowledge to their advantage and to further advocate for women's enfranchisement. The WEAU gave legal advice to the female, white population about votes, whereas the Sash created advice offices where they would give free legal advice to black people who were subjected to passes.

[71] The Friend of the Sovereignty and Bloemfontein Gazette newspaper, 26 August 1913 cited in Wells, *We have Done with Pleading,* p. 26.
[72] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference BC1129, Pamphlet, M De Villiers, Some Points Concerning the Legal Status of Women in the Province of the Cape of Good Hope, March 1911, p. 1.

Transnational education also came in the form of international guest speakers, as a way of educating members. The Cape WEL were proactive as part of a social movement and transnationalism by spreading the word of women's roles in society. In 1926, several talks were organised around the Cape Province. Solly, in particular, played a significant role in spreading the word of women's suffrage campaigns by speaking at student meetings and organising academics to give talks about the power and influence of women in society.[73] The importance of these talks is the wide audience they reached; whether it was students at university or asking academics to speak at one of the meetings, the audience had the opportunity to explore and understand ideas related to women's rights. It also demonstrated WEL's strengths as part of a wider social movement that was trying to spread ideas and ideologies, and influence younger generations on how to fight against issues faced by women.

Organisations such as the WEL Cape branch used their international connections to further develop knowledge and understanding of women's roles internationally. They organised female guest speakers from the UK to speak at some of their meetings in the Cape,[74] giving Cape WEL members exposure to English women whose experiences differed from their own. This provided excellent opportunities to spread knowledge about the wider international and UK women's movement, while increasing exposure to women's issues to a wider audience of South African women, who might not have had the opportunity of going abroad nor experiencing women's struggles in other countries.

Through these international visits and publications, it was implied that South African women should have the same ambition as their English counterparts. This was emphasised by Fedden who highlighted that since 1918, twenty Bills had been passed in the UK in the interests of women and children in Britain.[75] The UK suffragettes adopted a more aggressive and militant approach, which included hunger strikes, imprisonment and so forth; South African women were not as aggressive and were labelled by foreigners like Fedden as being too passive.[76] Fedden's perspective did not take into account South Africa's complex political

[73] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35, Occasional Paper, Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union 1926, p. 6.
[74] Ibid., p. 4.
[75] Ibid., p. 6.
[76] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35, Occasional Paper, Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union 1926, p. 7.

context, but rather she compared South Africa to her own experience and the English context, which was more conscious of class than race. South African women responded to a different environment where racial division and cultural differences between the Afrikaners and English-speakers impacted society, whereas UK suffragettes fought longer and reached a discourse in a context where they became more militant. This combative attitude eventually emerged in South Africa in the 1960s amongst men and women against apartheid, however this was premature for the South African women's movement in the 1920s, which was still relatively new to the international women's movement.

Nevertheless, the South African transnational women's movement emerged at a time when it was ready to respond to wider international themes and political challenges in the country. 'Schreiner maintained that the women's movement could only arise when society was ready for and demanded it'.[77] South African women were ready to take part in international discussions about women's suffrage, but more importantly, were ready to address controversial and dividing issues in South Africa, specifically race in the political system.

Race, enfranchisement and transnationalism

Enfranchisement and race intersected in women's national and transnational activism. The race question in South Africa was closely intertwined with enfranchisement, where the Cape colony was the only colony that allowed black people to vote[78] if they met certain statutory requirements linked to their education and property qualifications. Even so, in the context of the early twentieth century, it was unthinkable to allow any woman to vote, regardless of race.

Although 1930 was a victorious year for white women's enfranchisement, it was the opposite for black women. By 1930, black women needed to obtain a 'certificate of approval' in order to go into urban areas.[79] Whether termed as certificates, or reference books, passes were being re-introduced for black women, restricting and limiting their movement in the country. The paradox of having white women on one hand getting the vote and becoming somewhat liberated, while black

[77] Helen Joseph, 'South Africa's Greatest Daughter', *Liberation: A Journal of Democratic Discussion* 11 (1955), p. 14.
[78] Meintjes, 'The Women's Struggle for Equality during South Africa's Transition to Democracy', p. 52.
[79] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Cb.1.3.4, correspondence between the ANCWL and FSAW, 6 June 1959.

women were increasingly restricted, demonstrates that race was a dividing and defining issue in South Africa's community, which was further exacerbated by the pass system. Some white women fought for suffrage while black women fought against passes or reference books.

The majority of the organisations in the South African women's movement were racially inclusive and saw the need to unite all women to fight for human rights. The WCTU became increasingly active in and concerned with enfranchisement in South Africa. The temperance union was supportive of all South African women having the vote regardless of race. Emilie Solomon, Vice President of the World WCTU until 1931, publically disapproved of only white women getting the votes when the WCTU actively fought for all South African women's suffrage, regardless of race.[80] Solomon supported the vote for women in a non-racial capacity and refused to use her vote as she felt it was being compromised[81] as it was not representative of all South African women.

The WCTU began as a white organisation but expanded its influence by uniting with women of other races. The union's membership was described as tiny, 'confined to exclusively white, upper class women in towns'[82] and while this might have been the situation when it was initially set up in 1889, by 1911 it was a popular organisation with a membership of 2000 women,[83] that helped establish and collaborate with the Coloured and Native Union in the Cape,[84] increasing its audience to a multiracial cohort. This meant the temperance union promoted its aims of restricting liquor and gaining enfranchisement through collaborating with women from other races, increasing its impact and reaching a wider audience through partnerships.

Significantly, the WCTU was the first South African women's organisation that worked alongside other multiracial women's organisations in South Africa. It is crucial to acknowledge this approach as it demonstrates the WCTU's progressive attitude towards women's activism and how it served as the predecessor to FEDSAW's multiracial approach to protests in the 1950s. The organisation worked

[80] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP178.SOL; Speech, Emilie Solomon (WCTU leader) Opening Address: 46th Convention of the Cape Province of the WCTU, Port Elizabeth. October 1935.
[81] Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, p. 335.
[82] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa*, p.10.
[83] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35; Article, Julia Solly (WEL leader), 'Growth of an Idea', Women's Enfranchisement League: Our Claim for Enfranchisement– Cape Colony, 1912, p. 48.
[84] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP 178 WHIT; Pamphlet, *The White Ribbon*, December 1989.p. 72.

with coloured and native women in the province who 'were interested in their Union'[85] and used their position to educate and mentor coloured and black women on how best to politically organise and represent themselves in South Africa. As a result, the WCTU was used as a model organisation upon which new organisations could base their own structure, much like it did for the WEL.

Black and coloured women's relationship with the WCTU was recorded in the organisation's publication *The White Ribbon Centenary 1889–1989*. The collaborative relationship was described as the WCTU extending 'the right hand of fellowship',[86] indicating they were eager and willing to help establish and develop other organisations. The Coloured and Native Union was further affiliated with the World WCTU in 1920 and was represented at the WCTU's world convention in London in the same year. This demonstrates the dual nature of the WCTU's role in bridging international contacts and networks with local organisations that fought on domestic issues. The WCTU was willing to assist all women in South Africa regardless of race, through exposing them to a wider audience while giving these women the opportunity to take part in political or social activities, whether national or international. Doing so, helped them find support and solutions to issues experienced in South Africa. The WCTU did not define themselves as transnational, but encouraged international dialogues and connections, encouraging South African women to get involved in the wider global debate and movement.

Debates about race divided some women's organisations such as the WEL. Specific league branches wanted to fight for all women's suffrage, regardless of race, which led to a split in purpose and organisational aims. The internal conflict between the WEL Cape and Johannesburg branches in 1909 over the representation of race meant that a new organisation was planned and eventually created. This took the form of South Africa's first national suffrage society, called the WEAU, created in 1911 in Durban with the aim of obtaining white women's votes.[87] The WEAU was an umbrella organisation that represented several suffrage societies including the Reform Club and the Johannesburg WEL branch. The Johannesburg branch was wary of getting involved in racial politics and was supported by influential leaders such as IWSA's President Catt and WEAU leader Lady Rose-Innes, who

[85] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP 178.06 WOM, Pamphlet, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Cape Province: Golden Jubilee 1889–1939, 1939, p. 3.
[86] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP 178 WHIT, Pamphlet, The White Ribbon, December 1989, p. 72.
[87] Haysom, 'Olive Schreiner and the Women's Vote', p. 32.

publicly stated in 1926 that 'we know in our hearts we shall not get all that we ask, but we are very anxious for that half loaf. The other may come.'[88] This statement justified why the white women should get the vote, as if it was a sacrifice that needed to be made, when in reality it was a victory for white women and the government who advocated white supremacy in South African society.

Most international women's organisations understood the sensitive and complex nature of race in South Africa and did not advise South African women's organisations on how to respond to the political issue of race. The British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union (BDWSU), later renamed as the British Dominions Woman Citizenship Union (BDWCU), acknowledged there were many active supporters in South Africa, however recognised that the country had 'special difficulties'[89] that went beyond the fight for women's votes, making their fight for suffrage complicated. The BDWCU understood the controversial and politicised issues surrounding race in South Africa; there was unanimous recognition that the South African women's movement faced atypical circumstances that divided them.

Despite this, not all international women's organisations felt they should not confront racial politics. The IWSA, under Catt's guidance, encouraged the WEL to change its approach to women's enfranchisement in South Africa and create the WEAU to unite women's organisations to fight for white women's votes. Catt's influence also echoed the debates and divide amongst white American women when questioning black and women's enfranchisement that occurred in the USA in the 1860s and 70s[90] where white women fought for the vote and obtained it through racial exclusion. In hindsight, the emergence of WEAU's aim for white women's enfranchisement was a repetition of what had happened in the USA fifty years earlier. If there had not been an international trend at the time or a world tour organised by the IWSA, would the Johannesburg WEL branch have focused merely on white women's votes, or continued as an organisation that fought for all women of all races? Transnational connections were powerful and influential in creating and guiding organisations, as well as dividing them.

The lack of knowledge about South Africa's racial politics was clear during the IWSA's international tour in 1911, and was evident in Catt's advice about the racial

[88] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p.23
[89] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35, British Dominions Women Suffrage Union report, London 1918, p. 26.
[90] Sheila Rowbotham, *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States*, (UK: Penguin, 1999), p. 47.

divide in South Africa. External pressure and advice by international organisations such as the IWSA left the WEL divided. Catt advised WEL to only focus on white women's votes in a bid to get women's votes more quickly. As a result Schreiner left the WEL and ended her involvement in achieving women's enfranchisement in South Africa as she could not 'identify herself with a woman's movement functioning on racial lines.'[91] Schreiner's step down from politics was a bold action signifying she did not conform to the colour bar and was not going to be advised on how to respond to politics in her home country by foreigners. International partnerships were meant to be mutual relationships, and being told how to react to an issue such as race in South Africa illustrated that there was some kind of hierarchy where South African women's opinions and experiences were not being considered and they were being told what to do.

Additionally, there were divisions within the WEAU about why white women should be the only women to get the vote. Lady De Villiers, a WEAU member, defended this stance by further supporting Lady Rose-Innes' comment on the vote, stating the organisation wanted some form of enfranchisement as soon as possible, and the easiest way this would happen was if white women got the vote.[92] Due to the racial division in the country during the 1920s, the WEAU felt this was a plausible demand. However in the same publication, the role of racial dominance and superiority emerged in support of segregationist policies in South Africa, rather than women's fight for suffrage. Another WEAU member, Mrs Nel, advocated the need for the white women's vote, and noted that this vote would empower the white population to outnumber the black vote in the Cape.[93] This illustrates how some of the WEAU members adapted their approach to the white women's vote to accommodate and support political views of racial exclusion. This highlighted different perspectives about women's votes in the same organisation, where there was not just one perspective about women's suffrage, but also that race in relation to enfranchisement was a highly debated topic within the WEAU itself.

Despite its widespread representation, the Cape WEL refused to join the WEAU due to its political stance on race. The WEL Cape branch believed that all women had the right to vote regardless of race and that it should therefore be an

[91] Joseph, 'South Africa's Greatest Daughter', p. 15.
[92] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35; Occasional Paper, Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union 1926, p. 1.
[93] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35; Occasional Paper, Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union 1926, p. 2.

inclusive organisation that represented women of all races. Due to their different stances on race, the relationship between the WEAU and WEL Cape branch was initially strained however by 1923 and 1926 the WEL Cape branch appeared in the WEAU's publications. An article published in the 1923 occasional paper branded the Cape WEL as the 'tax resisting league'[94] that argued for equality by stating that if women did not have the vote and were therefore not seen as citizens of the state by the government, then they should not be obligated to pay taxes like their male counterparts who had the vote.[95] This was a bold statement and protest against taxes in particular, where the organisations could have been prosecuted. This also indicates their viewpoint of gender equality as the main message, which was transnational in its own right, despite no mention of race.

Furthermore, race seemed to dictate what women were fighting against, where white women were mostly focused on fighting for suffrage and black women were fighting against the proposed passes. However, this was challenged in 1913, when the Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association protested for votes and against passes. The organisation consisted of middle and working class, black and coloured women, and it organised protests against the passes around the country, specifically in Bloemfontein (the capital of the Orange Free State province) and the Cape.[96] These protesters were educated, well read and literate,[97] which was demonstrated in their protests where they shouted 'votes for women' in one of the protests[98], proving these protesters knew women's suffrage was an anticipated and controversial topic internationally. Moreover, association members wore blue ribbons, in support of the British suffrage movement,[99] protesting in solidarity and wearing a kind of uniform signifying their support. One protester was reportedly wrapped in the Union Jack, representing her loyalty to the cause,[100] highlighting a strong link and correlation to what was happening in the UK. Therefore, there was an understanding the British women fought against a struggle, which was supported by South African women, regardless of race.

[94] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35, Occasional Paper, Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union 1923, p. 4.
[95] Ibid., p. 3.
[96] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes,* p. 58.
[97] Judy Kimble and Elaine Unterhalter, 'We opened the Road for you, you must go forward' ANC Women's Struggles, 1912–1982', *Feminist Review*, 12 (1982), p. 18.
[98] Julia Wells, 'Why women Rebel: A Comparative Study of South African Women's Resistance in Bloemfontein (1913) and Johannesburg (1958)', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 10 (1) (1983), p. 60.
[99] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes,* p. 58.
[100] Wells, *We have Done with Pleading,* p. 21.

Transnationalism further encouraged women to organise themselves politically and address local issues, as this set them apart from other international women's organisations, in which white women were concerned with women's suffrage while black women fought against passes. Fighting for votes signified there was an imbalance in political rights, while passes signified the fight for freedom of movement. Both of these campaigns demonstrate the very different reality and issues faced by different South African women. In 1918, black women continued to politically organise themselves and the Bantu Women's League was created. The League's aims were to protect African women's rights, specifically against women having to carry passes and being medically inspected before becoming a domestic servant. [101] Passes were a consistent threat and issue for black women from as early as 1913 and this continued well into the 1950s.

Some historians argue the South African suffrage movement was weakened by race and imperialism. Imperialism was understood as something that 'empowered and repelled women's enfranchisement'. [102] On one hand it helped women's organisations to 'link hands across the sea', [103] encouraging networking and organisation amongst women domestically and internationally and increasing support through solidarity. However, it also repelled movements through magnifying the contextual difference and tensions in society. In South Africa's case, it magnified racial politics where race was the prominent issue over gender and non-white people did not have basic human rights.

Networks and the rise of transnational women leaders in South Africa

Networks and progressive women leaders were important attributes in the South African transnational women's movement, and were the driving force in developing the movement in the country. Most South African female leaders who would go on to create women's organisations, were well connected and travelled extensively, becoming part of a network of women activists. Between the WCTU and links to the UK- based WSPU and British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union (BDWSU), a first international wave of women's movements, as termed by historian Leila Rupp, emerged after the First World War. This explored the concept of the

[101] Alfred Xuma, *What an Educated African Girl Can Do* (USA: The Women's Parent Mite Missionary Society of the A.M.E Church, 1930), p. 18.
[102] Gaitskell, 'The Imperial Tie', p. 4.
[103] Ibid.

international collective identity formed by women through the emergence of international organisations[104] such as the IWSA. Through these organisations, the struggle for enfranchisement spread. The very nature of the IWSA was to represent and advocate for universal women's suffrage and its international identity was further enforced by its diverse membership.

Furthermore, female leaders were often underestimated in South African politics. South African women were challenged through party politics. There were various meetings of South African suffragists by October 1913, and despite the first Prime Minister of South Africa, General Botha, being sympathetic to the women's cause, stated the government could not take action as there were other politico-racial issues such as the coloured vote and the Land Act that needed to be addressed.[105] This further proves the secondary importance of women's votes in South Africa as a political issue. Moreover, women were challenged by the media. The South African media did not take WEL and the WEAU all that seriously. According to the WEAU publication *Flashlight*, 'WEL was treated as a joke'[106] while newspapers such as the *Natal Mercury*, were patronising by comparing women's meetings to a 'picnic' and stating that women did not have any business in politics, as their endeavours would ultimately fail.[107] Regardless of these reports, the WEAU and WEL continued to promote white women's votes and succeeded when in 1930 the Women's Enfranchisement Bill was passed by Hertzog and the National Party government.

Fellow Commonwealth countries also influenced South Africa, aiding in its transnational networks. By 1913, connections and networks were being made in the women's movement with Australian suffragists Margaret Hodge and Harriet Newcomb touring South Africa.[108] Australia and New Zealand were the first countries to have achieved women's enfranchisement and spread the word of how they managed to achieve this through international tours. This highlighted what women were doing within the commonwealth and led to the establishment of the BDWSU, which was later renamed the BDWCU. The latter was created by Australian and New Zealand women's organisations to further develop the international women's

[104] Rupp, *Worlds of Women,* p. 3.
[105] Sybil Oldfield, *International Women Suffrage: July 1913– October 1914* (USA: Taylor and Francis Group, 2003), p. 87.
[106] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A133 Pamphlet: Flashlight– Victory Number, 1930, p. 28.
[107] Walker, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, p. 335.
[108] Oldfield, *International Women Suffrage,* p. 87.

movement, but was more specifically aimed at getting South African and Canadian women more involved in the suffrage movement.[109] The Australia and New Zealand Women's Voter's Association held meetings in Cape Town[110] in order to involve South African women in the movement. This association was keen to open dialogues and discussions with South African women about enfranchisement, therefore directly contributing to spreading ideas, structures and models of enfranchisement, while also encouraging women to engage and contribute to the wider movement as representatives of fellow Commonwealth countries.

Transnationalism gave rise to new women leaders who were politically active and understood the importance of domestic and international cooperation to fight for justice. The WCTU was South Africa's first transnational women's organisation and was fundamental in influencing women's leadership, creating a new generation of leaders that would start to shape the women's movement in South Africa. Julia Solly was involved in the WCTU in 1892, becoming a superintendent in the WCTU's franchise department in 1895,[111] and she held this position until the 1930s.[112] By 1913 she had established the National Women's Council of South Africa (NWCSA),[113] which aimed to help women with their economic, social, intellectual and political development[114] and later she established the WEL in the Cape. Emily Macintosh, also a former WCTU member, became the first WEAU president, an umbrella organisation that represented several suffrage societies in the country.[115] Both Macintosh and Solly gained experience and exposure in the WCTU, which gave them confidence to create and lead new women's organisations.

Personal and political connections also helped further the WCTU's aims in South Africa. Scottish Georgiana Solomon, who was married to the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, Saul Solomon, went on to establish further organisations and was the President of the Social Purity Alliance in Cape Town. She was also co-founder of the South African Women's Federation (SAVF) with Annie Botha, the First Lady of

[109] Gaitskell, 'The Imperial Tie', p. 9.
[110] Oldfield, *International Women Suffrage*, p. 87.
[111] Human Sciences Research Council, *Women Marching into the 21st Century: Wathint' Abafazi Wathint' Imbokodo* (South Africa: HSRC Press, 2000), p. 74.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC 775; Annual Report, National Council of Women in South Africa 1947– 48, p. 19.
[115] Tyrrell, *Woman's World, Woman's Empire,* p. 223.

South Africa in 1910, and was on the BDWCU advisory committee and would meet in London for these meetings as well as working with the executive committee.[116]

This was a well-travelled family and one of the places they travelled to frequently was London. Georgiana, her daughter Daisy and niece Emilie were also involved in the Suffragette Riots in London in 1910 and Daisy in particular was associated with the more radical suffragettes.[117] Daisy became an active member of the WSPU, was actively involved in the WSPU protests, and was the BDWSU's literary secretary.

Solomon was not the only British woman in South Africa who had experience abroad. Julia Solly discussed in her work how the women's movement in South Africa stemmed from the growth of an idea.[118] The idea of women's enfranchisement and equality originated in the USA and the UK, and like a seed, it had spread and grown to other countries such as South Africa. It is in this essay that Solly and the WEL gave recognition to other women's organisations and countries that had helped shape South Africa's own women's movement such as the Seneca Falls in 1848 in the USA as well as the votes for women passed in New Zealand and Australia in 1893 and 1902 respectively. Solly was concerned about securing women's rights[119] in South Africa and was conscious that women's rights was a global issue, not an isolated one. Solly's work reinforced that South African women were part of a global community and international sisterhood. Solly's awareness of the women's movement stemmed from when she grew up in the UK, where her mother and sisters were involved in the Women's Liberal Federation (WLF) in Liverpool.[120] From an early age, Solly was exposed to the women's plight, and understood and fought for the right for women's votes and political representation.

Solly worked closely with Olive Schreiner and co- founded the WEL in the Cape colony in 1907. The latter was the vice president of WEL's Cape branch,[121] and was also well travelled which exposed her to literature related to the UK's women's movement, as well as developing valuable networks and contacts such as

[116] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35, BDWCU report, London 1918, p. 12.
[117] Roberta Nicholls, *The Women's Parliament : The National Council of the Women of New Zealand, 1896–1920* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1996), p. 93.
[118] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35; Article, Julia Solly (WEL leader), 'Growth of an Idea', Women's Enfranchisement League: Our Claim for Enfranchisement– Cape Colony, 1912, p. 40.
[119] Human Sciences Research Council and Group: Democracy and Governance, *Women Marching into the 21st Century: Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokodo* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 2000), p. 74.
[120] Krista Cowman, *Mrs Brown Is a Man and a Brother: Women in Merseyside's Political Organisations, 1890–1920* (Liverpool University Press, 2004), p. 46.
[121] Haysom, 'Olive Schreiner and the Women's Vote', p. 31.

suffragists Sylvia Pankhurst, Constance Lytton, Fred Pethick- Lawrence, socialist activist Eleanor Marx, and Gandhi, who she first met in 1909 in the Cape, and again in London in 1914.[122] In the 1880s, Schreiner had been a member of the Men and Women's Club in London, a social group that explored and analysed a wide range of topics.[123] Interactions with progressive thinkers abroad and in South Africa shaped how Schreiner interpreted the 'woman question' in South Africa and how she interpreted women developing nationally and internationally.[124] By having an eclectic group of acquaintances and friends, Schreiner was able to exchange and share ideas about women's rights and human rights, that would transcend boundaries, which would be reflected in her 1911 publication of *Woman and Labour*.

South African leaders also contributed to the international campaigns, creating a dialogue in the transnational movement. Schreiner, in particular, possibly the most internationally active South African woman leader, was also involved in and contributed to the international women's movement, and was a committee member and invited as a guest speaker at the International Congress of Women at the Hague in 1915.[125] This committee was created in the hope of establishing peace during the First World War.[126] While the committee consisted of women from all around the world, it was a 'truly international and representative Federation of nations in the future'.[127] Being part of such committees finessed Schreiner's perspective about human rights. At the Hague, she stated in a report in 1915, 'the time has now come for the great step which humanity must take to continue its upward path– the step across the narrow bounds of nation and race into a larger and wider human fellowship'.[128] Schreiner emphasised that the fight for equality and human rights was not just confined to women. Schreiner's campaign for human rights was consistent throughout her life and was reiterated in the last letter Jacobs received from her before her death. Schreiner stated all that women should make the world one of 'peace and freedom for everyone',[129] emphasising she believed in freedom for all

[122] First and Scott, *Olive Schreiner,* p. 304.
[123] Ibid., p. 145.
[124] Ibid., p. 268.
[125] Judith Raiskin, *Snow on the Cane Fields: Women's Writings and Creole Subjectivity* (USA: University of Minnesota, 1996), p. 19.
[126] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35, International Congress of Women report– Hague 1915.
[127] Raiskin, *Snow on the Cane Fields*, p. 21.
[128] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference:, PC/06/396-11/35, International Congress of Women report– Hague 1915.
[129] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference:, PC/06/396-11/35, Report of Third International Congress of Women– Vienna, 10–17 July 1921.

people and stating 'no one was alone in the universe'.[130] There was recognition that everyone belonged to an international community and therefore should take their rightful place fighting for peace and rights for all.

Schreiner was also present in BDWCU meetings in London and was a member of the BDWCU's advisory committee from December 1915 to June 1916,[131] and a guest speaker at a BDWCU luncheon held in London in January 1917, where she discussed South African women's experiences.[132] These luncheons were described as 'not only been most pleasant and interesting, but very helpful.'[133] This highlights the importance of information exchange, where different perspectives were described as helpful as they were empowering and inspiring women to continue fighting against injustices, while forming an international support system.

Schreiner became a South African ambassador on behalf of South African women, and was involved in many organisations, which led to her being recognised as a political activist, advocating for peace and human rights. Following her death, Schreiner was remembered as a 'great woman'[134] at the International Congress of Women in Vienna, where the congress stood in silence to commemorate her life. This demonstrated not only how well known and respected she was in fighting against injustices, but also through her proactive approach, her influence was far reaching, defying physical boundaries and borders.

WEL benefitted from having Schreiner and Solly as its leaders.[135] Both women had many contacts in the UK and South Africa and were politically challenging South African women's roles. Schreiner was politically outspoken and openly supported Gandhi's concept of passive protest (satyagraha) however she did not agree with his alliance and support of Britain during conflicts such as The South African War and the First World War (WW1).[136] She also knew Eleanor Marx (Karl Marx's daughter) whom she met in London in 1882.[137] Schreiner was exposed to political thinkers of the time who challenged existing political systems, influencing her liberal approach towards South African politics.

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[130] Ibid.
[131] University of California, British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union, Report of the Second (Biennial) Conference, London 1916, https://archive.org/details/britishdominians00londiala accessed on 7 March 2014.
[132] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35, British Dominions Women Suffrage Union report, London 1918, p. 6.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Report of the Third International Congress of Women, Vienna, 10-17 July 1921, p. 143.
[135] First and Scott, *Olive Schreiner,* p. 261.
[136] First and Scott, *Olive Schreiner,* p. 304.
[137] Ibid., p. 147.

Solly and Schreiner were progressive in that they did not believe in racial division in South Africa. Having these strong individuals with enriched experiences and networks leading the WEL Cape branch meant that the organisation was incredibly popular and was the largest WEL branch with approximately 2000 members in 1913.[138] Members travelled to various women's congresses.

The league was far reaching and members attended several international conferences. In 1908, the WEL Cape branch attended the 4th International Woman Suffrage Congress in Amsterdam and 1913, the 7th International Woman Suffrage Congress in Budapest.[139] Under Solly and Schreiner's leadership, the WEL Cape branch believed in the right for all women to have the vote regardless of race and took the opportunity to share their ideals and experiences with the rest of the world.

However, Emilie Solomon was an underrated leader in the South African transnational women's movement. Her contributions to the WCTU and South African history have not been researched in detail, despite her becoming a prominent leader in the WWCTU and WCTU. Emilie was the Cape Colony President of the WCTU from 1911–1919, the South African national president of the WCTU from 1919–1925 and the Vice President of the World WCTU from 1925–1931.[140] Moreover, Emilie used her senior position to further engage with the international community and was an active part of world conventions, which helped her build networks and exposed her to various challenges women and wider societies faced. Emilie's first trip overseas was in December 1894, when she travelled with five other WCTU members to Palestine, Greece, Italy, Switzerland, Africa and London to spread the word of the temperance union.[141] In 1913, she was on the WCTU resolutions committee in Brooklyn, USA; in 1920 she was in London as the South African WCTU president and was on the committee of credentials; in 1925, she was in Edinburgh and was voted in as the World Vice-President for the WCTU. She was re-elected in this position in Lausanne in 1928 and by 1934 she was in Stockholm where she declined re-election and was made a member of the World's Advisory committee.[142] She used her role in these committees to discuss issues around race, bilingualism

[138] Gaitskell, 'The Imperial Tie', p. 10.
[139] London School of Economics, Women's Library, Reference: PC/06/396-11/35, International Women's Suffrage News–Centenary Edition, 1904–2004.
[140] Tyrell, *Woman's World, Woman's Empire*…p. 224.
[141] Carson, *Emilie Solomon,* p. 141
[142] Ibid., p. 66

and national unity[143] and was dedicated to creating an inclusive society, fighting for human rights.

By the end of the nineteenth century, women's suffrage activism was based on social, personal networking in the form of friendship or relations to the family[144] and this formed the basis of the transnational movement. This shifted in the twentieth century, when the transnational movement emerged due to common organisational ideals and aims. The older women leaders from these organisations were supported by the younger generation [145] as the sentiment was about collaborating and supporting a wider movement of human rights and equality.

While these networks helped create momentum for solidarity, they also divided individuals and their political opinions. WEL's political rift about race caused tension between female leaders, notably Schreiner and Catt. Schreiner excluded herself from the WEAU when it was announced that the union would fight solely for white women's enfranchisement. She did not continue to pursue and lead the women's movement in South Africa because of how it was linked to race and ultimately affected by political segregation. Schreiner refused to identify with a movement that was defined by race; as she was an advocate of equality regardless of race, class or gender.[146] 'We have here in our little movement, only slaves, clanking their little chains as they go along, asking for their little franchise'.[147] By referring to the 'little movement' and 'little chains', the franchise question and South African women's suffrage seem trivial and even insignificant in relation to the larger South African context, which she believed should be about fighting for equality for all[148] on a national and international scale. There is also reference to the dominance and influence of countries such as the UK and USA, and the subordination of South Africa's indigenous people by referring to them as 'slaves'. Women were becoming emancipated around the world by gaining the vote, however to truly be liberated, prejudices linked to race, class and gender needed to be overcome.

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[143] Ibid.
[144] Kay Whitehead and Lynne Trethewey, 'Aging and Activism in the Context of the British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union, 1914–1922', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 31 (2008), p. 30.
[145] Whitehead and Trethewey, 'Aging and activism in the context of the British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union, 1914–1922', p. 39.
[146] Joseph, 'South Africa's Greatest Daughter', p. 15.
[147] Olive Schreiner to Francis Smith, 27 June 1908, in *The Olive Schreiner Letters Online*, Ref: Letters/ 473 https://www.oliveschreiner.org/vre?view=collections&archiveid=27&letterid=all&arrangeby=datedesonly, accessed 20 January 2015.
[148] Joseph, 'South Africa's Greatest Daughter', p. 15.

By taking this political stance, the WEAU's racial debate demonstrated that the organisation followed the political framework set out by the NP, therefore reflecting the political context of what was happening in South Africa at the time. There is no evidence to suggest the WEAU cooperated with multiracial organisations, although in 1921 the union invited Charlotte Maxeke, leader of the Bantu Women's League, to speak at an annual WEAU conference. It was labelled as a 'non-racial' organisation[149] but according to scholars such as Meintjes, its policies allowed for white domination[150] in which they did not want to overthrow the political structure they benefitted from, especially being white upper class women.[151] As a result it could be interpreted that race and class, rather than loyalty to one's gender, shaped the WEAU.

Like Schreiner, Emilie Solomon and Maxeke also advocated for multiracial women's enfranchisement in South Africa. Solomon felt it was her obligation to speak up about injustices and she believed the Women's Enfranchisement Bill would destroy native aspirations and 'the soul of a people'.[152] White women such as Schreiner and Solomon were politically privileged in South Africa due to their race and used their social positions as a way of protesting against segregating women's rights to vote. Schreiner and Solomon were progressive thinkers, looking at the role women played in uniting against political segregation and discrimination.

Similarly, Maxeke was also openly committed to a multiracial society, which is why she worked with other women's organisations in South Africa. By the 1920s she was involved in the Joint Council of Europeans and Bantus to encourage 'emancipation to a multiracial society'.[153] Maxeke, the president and founder of the Bantu Women's League, was well travelled and was encouraged to study by her religious father.[154] Through her involvement in her church choir, she travelled to the UK to perform for Queen Victoria[155] and the USA, where she studied at Wilberforce University in Ohio and completed her BSc in 1905.[156] Through travelling and studying abroad, Maxeke understood women's plight in different contexts, and

[149] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 22.
[150] Meintjes, 'The Women's Struggle for Equality during South Africa's Transition to Democracy', p. 52.
[151] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 22.
[152] Carson, *Emilie Solomon,* p. 89.
[153] Joan Jackson, 'Charlotte Makgoma Manye Maxeke: Her Legacy Lives on'*, Studia Historiaw Ecclesiasticae*, 34, (April 2008), p. 83.
[154] Xuma, *What an Educated African Girl Can Do*, p.10.
[155] Mary Benson, *The Struggle for a Birthright* (England: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 41.
[156] Benson, *The Struggle for a Birthright*, p. 44.

managed to form networks with influential leaders such as Emmeline Pankhurst.[157] This experience was unique, especially for a black woman, but it also meant people like Maxeke could implement concepts and ideas learnt abroad into the South African context, through creating organisations such as the Bantu Women's League.

Consequently, a small network of female leaders was created at the end of the nineteenth century, embodying the South African transnational women's movement. This included Emilie who held very senior positions in the WCTU and WWCTU; her aunt Georgiana Solomon, President of the WCTU Cape Town branch, President of the Social Purity Alliance in Cape Town and a co-founder of the SAVF; Schreiner, an international author and President of the WEL; Solly an honorary life vice president of the NCWSA;[158] and Elizabeth Molteno, daughter of the Cape Colony Prime Minister John Molteno. This group of individuals had in common a belief in racial and gender equality in South Africa. While these women belonged to different organisations, they would have networked with each other nonetheless. Solly knew Emilie, who openly supported the NCWSA and was the vice-president for many years.[159] Solomon also worked alongside individuals such as Lady Rose-Innes from the WEAU. Schreiner does not seem to have worked with Emilie but worked alongside Daisy and Georgiana Solomon due to their links in the BDWCU, and would have known Emilie through association. These networks became a tight circle of individuals who would have known each other personally, or by association; they created South Africa's transnational women's movement.

Conclusion

Transnationalism was essential in creating the earlier South African women's movement, where women were exposed to issues related to enfranchisement. The historiography on this is limited. This chapter has illustrated that South Africa's transnational women's movement created a blueprint for their successors, who would go on to follow their lead in the 1950s and '60s. They did so through creating strong transnational connections with individuals and organisations and used education as a way to spread and develop their transnational influence.

[157] Jackson, 'Charlotte Makgoma Manye Maxeke: Her Legacy Lives on', p. 78.
[158] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC 775; Annual Report, National Council of Women in South Africa 1947–1948, p. 1.
[159] Carson, *Emilie Solomon,* p. 90.

Transnationalism also highlighted the prominent and domestic issue of race in South Africa, where Catt, in particular, offered her opinion on how South African women should address women's suffrage in relation to racial politics. This led to South African female leaders fighting for racial equality and human rights, thereby helping these leaders further develop their political voice on a national and international level.

Transnational connections, contacts and networks acted as a catalyst for South African women to become more politically involved and organised. Their transnational connections emerged through international tours, which helped to establish the country's first transnational women's organisation, the WCTU in 1889. Two decades later, the same would be done with the IWSA. The importance of these tours was to promote organisations and gain support for their causes; networking with various organisations and individuals and connecting women to international debates such as enfranchisement. With an international tour, Leavitt networked with future leaders, such as Emilie Solomon and Julia Solly, and used the excursion as a way to mobilise women and gain support. However the temperance union was also well aware of the international debate for women's suffrage and as a result created its franchise department in the Cape in 1893. The temperance union never branded or labelled themselves as transnational per se, but they were transnational in nature, which was the very essence of what would catapult South African women into a dialogue with their international sisters.

The debates about enfranchisement were widespread and suffrage was the common bond in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However acquiring women's votes was not straightforward in South Africa. Race was an increasingly contested issue that divided the country and women's organisations. Black men in the Cape Colony had the right to vote since the mid–nineteenth century, however the same rule did not apply to the rest of the country. Women, on the other hand, regardless of race, did not have the vote. This divided organisations and led to debates amongst women's organisations such as the WCTU and WEL Cape Colony that advocated multi–racial women's votes compared to the rest of WEL who believed they should fight for white women's votes only and therefore created another organisation that embodied this perspective. Transnational influence clashed with domestic politics and under the leadership of president Carrie Chapman Catt, from the IWSA, the WEAU was created and focused solely on fighting for white

women's enfranchisement. This made the concept of enfranchisement synonymous with racism in South Africa, where votes were no longer only an issue of gender but also of race.

As a result, a small circle of South African female transnational leaders emerged who challenged South African politics and further developed their political voice and stance against discrimination in South Africa. Notable leaders such as Emilie Solomon openly rejected voting as a white woman, as she did not support the racial injustices that came with the right to vote. Solomon and Schreiner used their power internationally to educate the international audience about the complex South African situation and how women were part of the racial intricacy of human rights in the country. The WCTU, WEL and WEAU had publications that were used to increase their members' knowledge of international events or trends related to women's suffrage and experience. These organisations were also eager to bring in guest speakers from abroad who would not only share experiences from their home countries, but would also offer newer observations on what was happening in South Africa, often comparing both women's movements.

Through transnationalism and the movement of ideas and experiences, South African women became more confident and bolder in their leadership roles in society, which encouraged them to become more politically active and create new political women's organisations. Women such as Schreiner, Solly, Maxeke and Solomon learnt from international organisational models such as the WCTU and created new organisations responding to segregation issues in South Africa and broader injustices. These leaders helped organise and mobilise women politically through increasing their knowledge, networks and contacts.

These transnational leaders illustrated the two roles of information exchange. On one hand, international tours and education through publications and guest speakers shaped South African women's social and political roles by encouraging them to question possible enfranchisement and create organisations. Additionally, South African women had the unique opportunity to also contribute to the international women's movement through educating women abroad on just how complex the South African context was in relation to gender and racial issues. South African white, middle to upper class women such as the Solomon family and Schreiner were present at committee meetings and were, in their own right, guest speakers. They felt they had an obligation and right to not only be part of a wider

international women's movement but also to help further develop South African women's political positions within the country.

The FEDSAW and the Black Sash would go on to follow their predecessors' foundations in creating international networks with like-minded organisations; bond over transnational themes to strive for world peace; use education as a key to spread transnational influence both within the country and abroad; address the issues about race as legal issues; and give rise to new leaders who understood and valued the importance of transnationalism to fight for human rights. In order to fight against apartheid, FEDSAW and the Black Sash looked back at their predecessors for inspiration, structure and clues on how to unite all South African women to fight against injustice, and use international connections to help them do so.

Chapter 2 : Women fighting against apartheid in the 1950s: the emergence of the FEDSAW and the Black Sash.

Introduction

The Black Sash and FEDSAW found inspiration from the earlier South African transnational women's movement, and built on the blueprint created by the earlier pioneers by fighting against injustices. They did so while increasing women's political engagement and participation in society, pleading as women whose roles were as mothers and wives. Both organisations were inspired specifically by their predecessors' transnational links, networks and fight against unjust laws; and they were encouraged to be integrative and collaborative with other organisations fighting for racial equality.

Both organisations looked to key individuals who had previously played a significant role in including South African women in the international community, fighting for human and women's rights. The FEDSAW made reference to Olive Schreiner on more than one occasion in speeches, and acknowledged her national and international contribution; her literature, specifically *Women and Labour*; and her role in fighting for women's votes for all South Africans regardless of race when she was vice-president of the WEL.

The Black Sash had a more personal connection with their role model, Daisy Solomon. She was a more recent pioneer involved in the South African and international women's movements in the twentieth century, and was heavily involved in international women's organisations, fighting for suffrage, having been involved in organisations such as the WSPU and BDWSU. Solomon became a Sash member in the 1950s, although her role in the organisation was an honorary one where she was a guest speaker at events, rather than taking part in protests and demonstrations. Both Solomon and Schreiner represented a different struggle women had been involved in, where suffrage was the main focus, in a racially divided country. While they were a generation apart, representing the nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively, both were unafraid of getting politically involved in

protesting against the South African government and the racial segregation it imposed.

The fight for racial equality within South Africa was one of the attributes that bound the FEDSAW and Black Sash with earlier women's organisations. FEDSAW's fight against passes was inspired by the 1913 protests by the Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association, the first formal, multiracial women's organisation focused on anti-pass campaigns. While the association delayed the implementation of passes, it re-emerged as a threat once again in the 1950s, and was subsequently the context FEDSAW responded to, forming their anti-pass campaigns.

Similarly, the Black Sash was created because of their opposition to a racially discriminatory bill that proposed that coloureds be removed from the Common Voters' Roll. The non-white population had the vote in the Cape since 1853 and by the 1940s there were murmurs that the NP government wanted to remove them from the Common Voters' Roll. By 1955, these rumours came to fruition when the government planned to remove the coloureds from the voters roll, in a bid to increase the proportion of white voters in the Senate. This amendment would increase the power of the white vote and support for apartheid legislation, making implementing apartheid legislation easier.

The motivation to fight against these injustices was clear from the political experience and exposure the FEDSAW and Black Sash members had in the 1940s and 50s. Black Sash members such as Jean Sinclair, who was a prominent leader in her own right, were inspired by, and had experience in the Springbok Legion and its successor the Torch Commando. Both organisations were made up of white ex-serviceman and women who opposed removing coloureds from the Common Voters' Roll. Springbok Legion members would go on to support another organisation that promoted multi–racial cooperation against apartheid, called the Defiance Campaign.

This campaign unified opposition to apartheid and the NP, and inspired the FEDSAW in particular. Federation members were motivated by the Defiance Campaign, created in 1952, which was the first multi–racial, multi–party campaign between the ANC and SAIC that openly opposed apartheid and deliberately broke apartheid laws in order to get national and international attention. The campaign's aim was to politicise South Africans, while also trying to increase its white members. Helen Joseph, future FEDSAW national secretary, observed the campaign's

development and was inspired to become politically active in fighting against the NP's laws.

The FEDSAW and Black Sash's inspiration from the past has not been explored in current historiography, often only forming part of books recording the beginning of the organisation. Joseph[1] and Alexander[2] offer personal accounts about FEDSAW's links and admiration of Schreiner, however no secondary literature analyses the link between the Sash and Daisy Solomon. There are more sources that address the events that inspired these organisations, such as Julia Wells' study on the 1913 pass protest and the Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association,[3] which have formed part of wider debates by Shulamith Firestone[4] and Cherryl Walker, about how the 1913 protests fit within the South African women's movement.[5]

This chapter adds to the current limited literature by arguing that the FEDSAW and Black Sash were connected to the earlier South African transnational women's movement, and draws heavily on primary archival sources. The chapter provides new insights into the link between the FEDSAW and Black Sash, and their relationship with the earlier pioneers who were defined by transnationalism. It does so by exploring both organisations' origins, and argues they took inspiration from the earlier transnational women's movement. This is done through first addressing how South African women increased their political voice and international presence. Thereafter, specific key individuals such as Olive Schreiner and Daisy Solomon from the earlier South African transnational women's movement are explored to show how they were used as role models. The chapter ends by addressing the local inspiration that came from a programme of action and organisation such as the Defiance Campaign and Springbok Legion, which embodied the collective approach for racial equality fought for by the earlier women's movement, and also responded to contemporary issues from apartheid, inspiring the Federation and Black Sash to fight specifically against apartheid.

[1] Joseph, *Side by Side*, p. 73.
[2] Alexander, *All my Life and All my Strength*, p. 28.
[3] Wells, *We have Done with Pleading,* p. 21.
[4] Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*. (London: Cape Publishers, 1971), p. 27.
[5] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 22

Fighting against South African injustices: passes and coloured votes

Both the FEDSAW and Black Sash fought against the same injustices of racial discrimination as their predecessors. This was one of the main attributes carried forward from the earlier women's movement, where FEDSAW fought against the injustice of pass laws while the Black Sash fought against removing coloured voters from the Common Voters' Roll. Both these issues raised questions about human rights and racial equality in the country.

FEDSAW were focused on fighting against passes and became known for their anti-pass campaigns, which had beleaguered the black population for decades. Passes are context–specific in South Africa and were a point of political contention for many years. In 1893, the Orange Free State colony implemented legislation to control the movement of black men and women in urban areas,[6] and as a result, they were the first to carry passes in the country.[7] This led to protests and discontent in South Africa where people were monitored and controlled from moving freely.

The wider socio-politico- economic context contributed to the public's reaction and resentment towards passes. As a result, the Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association petitioned against passes in 1912, and by 1913 the first recorded anti-pass protest took place in South African history. This protest was by 'one of the earliest politically motivated women's organisations'[8] in the country, and the anti-pass campaign spanned over four months from May until September 1913. Black and coloured women protested by having mass meetings, marching to speak to the mayors of the towns where they were protesting and refusing to carry passes.[9] The first protest, on the 28th of May 1913, began with 200 women and escalated to 600 women the following day.[10] This increase in number demonstrated women's increased confidence and political voice, where women felt they could and should represent themselves regarding the injustice of the pass system and they were taking an active role against passes.

The 1913 protest left historians hypothesising the protest's nature and overall purpose. Firestone stated that the protest was related to the restrictions of Victorian

[6] Nancy Forestell and Maureen Moynagh, *Documenting First Wave Feminisms: Volume 1: Transnational Collaborations and Crosscurrents* (University of Toronto Press, 2012), p. 220.
[7] M.J. Daymond, Dorothy Driver, Sheila Meintjes, Lebola Molema, Chiedza Musengezi, Margie Orford and Nobantu Rasebotsa, *Women Writing Africa: The Southern Region* (New York: Feminist Press: City University of New York, 2003), p. 158.
[8] Robert Miller and Rick Wilford, *Women, Ethnicity and Nationalism: The Politics of Transition* (New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 60.
[9] Wells, *We have Done with Pleading,* p. 21.
[10] Ibid.

society in which political equality was seen as revolutionary and rebellious[11] with a Marxist approach, while Walker believed the women's movement was reformist rather than radical.[12] The women's movement, from this perspective, became synonymous with fighting against passes, therefore it allowed women to develop their political presence away from previously gendered spheres such as religion or education. Wells argued that the march was a demonstration of the post- structuralist movement in which women in the 1913 pass protest fit within the broader historical perspective of the women's movement.[13] These interpretations and arguments indicate that while it is often an overlooked event in South African history, the 1913 protest was significant in contributing to the foundation of the South African women's political movement in fighting against discrimination. These arguments also highlight how the Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association was the formal starting point of South African women's protests for issues that would re-emerge during apartheid.

After the 1913 strike, pressure for black women to carry passes decreased. The Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association protest contributed to the government's plan to abandon enforcing passes on African women.[14] By 1917, black women no longer needed to carry passes, but pass laws were not completely withdrawn from the Orange Free State[15] as they were still compulsory for black men. This was the first example of successful defeat of a racially oppressive government initiative. Women made their political statement and avoided having to carry passes.

Passes united women from different generations, experiences and organisations. The older generation of women previously involved in the 1913 pass protests encouraged and supported the younger and more educated women to continue fighting against passes.[16] The 1913 protest encouraged black women to take control of what was going to be implemented onto them by the government and openly protest against it. It was an action that also demonstrated to the government and themselves, the strength they had if they fought together in solidarity and united. This was the first multi–racial organisation that fought against passes, and was the

[11] Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*, p. 27.
[12] Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, p. 86.
[13] Wells, *We have Done with Pleading,* p. 21.
[14] Sally Robinson, 'Our Women Are a Rock'-Women and the Politics of Liberation in South Africa,' *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 6 (1) (1975), p. 7.
[15] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137,Cb1.3.4, 6 June 1959.
[16] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes,* p. 226.

first women's multi–racial organisation in South African history, providing a model for the FEDSAW's functioning.

The Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association members were well educated and connected. Women in the Orange Free State were assertive about their rights and were well informed about what was happening throughout the Union of South Africa. The 1912 petition by the Association stated 'your petitioners are the only women in the whole of the Union who are subjected to such an oppressive law; the women in other provinces are not subjected to any Pass Laws.'[17] These women had established networks so they knew what was happening in the rest of the country. They used this knowledge to help galvanise and mobilise support.

Aside from the Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association protests, black women were also becoming more politically active. Charlotte Maxeke created the Bantu Women's League in 1913, the predecessor of the ANCWL. This League addressed two main issues. Primarily the organisation was concerned with passes, but they also raised concern about the medical inspection of women before working in domestic service.[18] Both these issues violated African women and emphasised their vulnerability in society, and the need for political representation in order to protect their rights of movement and human rights. Apartheid and passes in particular promoted a collaborative approach amongst political parties, starting initially with the Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association in 1913, followed by the FEDSAW and eventually the Black Sash.

Like the Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association, FEDSAW's first protest was also against passes. At FEDSAW's mass National Conference in May 1955, the National Anti-Pass planning council stated 'The whole life of the African is at the mercy of the cursed document.'[19] FEDSAW understood the destructive nature of the passes and the implications they would have for the economic, social and political development of the black population in South Africa, especially women who were mothers with dependent children. FEDSAW continued to fight against passes for the rest of the 1950s and meticulously recorded details about passes, such as when they were issued, in which region, and which of their

[17] Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association petition 1912, cited in Daymond et al., *Women Writing Africa: The Southern Region* (New York: Feminist Press: City University of New York, 2003), p. 98.
[18] Xuma, *What an Educated African Girl Can Do*, p. 18.
[19] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137 Cb1.3.3, The Report of the National Anti-Pass planning council to the Mass National Conference held at Johannesburg on 30th May, 1955, p. 7.

members were arrested because of passes.[20] By detailing all this information, these records indicate the commitment of women fighting against passes but also the knowledge and insight they had about the system. The Federation made it their mission to fight against passes, making this the political campaign they were dedicated to until the 1960s.

FEDSAW were motivated by the 1913 women's protest, which inspired their leaders to fight against segregation and racial policies. FEDSAW's second president Lilian Ngoyi was inspired by and recognised the importance of the 1913 women's protest.[21] She learnt about this protest from her mother, and the story was subsequently told by Sol Plaatje,[22] the General Secretary of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), the ANC's predecessor. The expansion of knowledge about women's role in history and society was strongly linked to oral history, especially in rural parts of South Africa. It was with this, that leaders such as Ngoyi who emerged in the 1950s, would find motivation to fight against oppressive laws and challenge society's attitude towards the status of women.

The concept for FEDSAW was initiated in April 1953 in Port Elizabeth by Florence Matomela (ANCWL), Frances Baard and Ray Alexander[23] (both from the Food and Canning Workers Union), who suggested establishing a 'Mother of Nations' organisation.[24] The aim of this gathering was to unite organisations and individuals from the Defiance Campaign to discuss their struggle,[25] with the main concerns being the introduction of passes and increased food and transportation costs.[26] Passes were highlighted as the main concern early in the organisation.

This meeting was one where the Federation could also gauge interest from women and assess whether South African women were ready to formally create an exclusively women's organisation that would fight against injustices in society. By March 1954, letters were sent out to gain support for the Federation, highlighting women's equality and freedom for all South African people.[27] Approximately 75 women from all over the country signed the document[28] with notable leaders at the

[20] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Cb1.4.5, 'Issuing of Passes 1956–1957'.
[21] Wells, *We have Done with Pleading,* p. 40.
[22] Ibid., p. vii.
[23] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes,* p. 208.
[24] International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, Reference: Africa Labour Warwick folder, 194-197, October 1984, p. 25.
[25] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes,* p. 208.
[26] Ibid.
[27] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.1, 'Conference to promote Women's rights', 16 March 1954.
[28] Ibid.

time such as Hilda Bernstein, Josie Palmer and Frances Baard, as well as future leaders of the national liberation movement such as Albertina Sisulu, Helen Joseph and the previously thought to be apolitical Evelyn Mandela, Nelson Mandela's first wife, who all fought against apartheid.

Initially the Federation was going to be called the Union of South African Women, however after the inaugural conference the committee members raised that they disliked the name[29] and proposed it be changed to the Federation of South African Women. The word 'Federation' did not have any connotation with the country's past and united multiple organisations and races, personifying the solidarity in fighting for human rights and equality.

By 17 April 1954, FEDSAW was officially created, with its inaugural conference organised by Ray Alexander from the Food and Canning Workers Union (FCWU) and Bernstein (SACP). Other women who helped organise the Federation and would hold places in the Federation's committee, including those who would lead the organisation included Joseph (Congress of Democrats), Lucy Mvubelo (Garment Workers Union), Dora Tamana, Ida Mtwana and Annie Silinga (ANCWL), Fatima Meer (SAIC) and Josie Palmer (SACP) and Bertha Mashaba.[30] The symbiotic relationship between several organisations making up the Federation is an important attribute of the organisation and its commitment to representing all South African women. From a strategic perspective, it was vital that the committee consisted of as many political organisations and trade unions as possible to ensure diversity of representation.

FEDSAW's campaign against passes was evident in communication to its members. With this in mind, the FEDSAW made it very clear in their correspondence that all women in the organisation were against the passes being extended to black women.[31] Black men already carried passes, and were arrested on a daily basis for failing to show them in time.[32] They were also used to 'intimidate the African worker and keep his wages down,'[33] violating any freedom one might have. Passes were

[29] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ad1.2, correspondence from Ray Alexander to Hilda Bernstein, 22 May 1954.
[30] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes,* p. 208.
[31] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea2, 'Demands put Forward by the Congress', 1955, p. 4.
[32] Ibid.
[33] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Cb1.5.6, Speakers notes on passes– Ruth First, p. 6.

labelled as a 'badge of slavery',[34] linking them back to South Africa's history of slavery and also reiterating the vulnerability of black women. Passes were compared to a badge, as they were worn around women's necks in the rural areas which accepted them[35] and branded people as outcasts in society limiting their movement in areas.

The Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association and FEDSAW made history by galvanising women to fight against racial injustices and were connected through the fight against passes. The Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association was the first formally organised, bi-racial group of women who protested against passes, while the FEDSAW was the first multiracial organisation that protested against passes and led the largest anti-pass protest in South African history on the 9th of August 1956.

Additionally, passes were a threat to women due to their multiple roles in society as mothers, wives and workers. They were responsible for dependents, who would be left abandoned, traumatised and negatively affected if women were arrested. Furthermore, women would be forced to take employment in accordance with their permits[36] or risk losing employment, which would dictate where they would eventually work. Women were at risk of not getting their pensions if they refused to carry their passes, they could lose their jobs– teachers and nurses were dismissed from their jobs if they did not have passes– and they could not register their children at school.[37]

Similarly, the Black Sash, like the WEL, advocated for multiracial votes especially the coloured vote in the Cape. The Black Sash, initially called the Women's Defence of the Constitution League, felt strongly about preserving the coloured vote in South Africa, and was created to protest against the Senate Bill. Historically, multiracial voting in the Cape Colony first appeared in 1853, with the Cape Qualified Franchise, and was ratified in the Cape constitution. Since the South African Act in 1910, enfranchisement in the country was determined by race and sex, except in the Cape. Due to the 1887 Parliamentary Registration Bill education and property qualifications were used as a way of filtering which coloured people could

[34] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Cb1.4.4, FEDSAW reports, October 1957, p. 1.
[35] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, FEDSAW reports, date unknown, Cb 1.4.1, p. 2.
[36] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Cb1.4.7, FEDSAW memorandum from African women to Mayor of Brakpan, date unknown, p. 2.
[37] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 90.

vote.[38] Coloured disenfranchisement was further enhanced by the 1892 Franchise and Ballot Act, which raised property qualifications from twenty five pounds to seventy-five pounds, as well as incorporating a literacy test.[39] These laws, introduced by Prime Minister Cecil Rhodes, were a strategy to further filter which non-white men would be able to vote based on class and how they conformed to Western ideals of education.

The issue of coloured people being able to vote became increasingly contested in the twentieth century when the ruling NP government only wanted white people enfranchised in a bid to increase their support and control over the country. The government decided to remove coloured people from the Common Voters' Roll by proposing a Bill where the Senate would be enlarged,[40] therefore allowing a two-thirds majority vote in favour of the NP's policies related to issues such as coloured people's enfranchisement and other race- related policies and legislation.

South Africa was divided by the apartheid state into four main racial groups– white, black, coloured and Indian– and the Bill had different meanings to different racial populations in the country. According to Michelman, the white Afrikaans population saw the Senate Bill as a symbol of freedom and maintaining Afrikaner rule, whereas the white English population saw it as a way of directly manipulating the constitution.[41] The proposed Bill directly threatened the coloured and black population, while the Indian population– who did not have the vote in the Cape but could vote in the Natal colony until 1896[42], would still be under threat as it had the potential to be a gateway for the introduction of further discriminatory laws against them if it was passed.

The Senate Bill shocked the English population in South Africa with its radical approach of excluding non-whites from the voter's roll. It was in response to this, that on the 19th of May 1955, a group of English- speaking, middle to upper class, white women in Johannesburg decided over a cup of tea to formally organise themselves and protest against what was happening to the coloured people and the proposal of the Senate Bill.[43] The Women's Defence of the Constitution League, officially

[38] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 25.
[39] Maylam, *South Africa's Racial Past,* p. 38.
[40] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 24.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Contact Journal (Liberal Party), 6 June 1955, p. 1.
[43] Black Sash, 'The Story of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League', *Black Sash Journal*, 1 (1) (January 1956), p. 6.

renamed the Black Sash in April 1956,[44] was established in 1955 and aimed to 'propagate respect for the constitution'.[45] The League officially changed its name after the South African press, more specifically the *Sunday Times*, nicknamed the protesters the Black Sash at their November 1955 protest against the Senate Bill[46] based on their protest outfits. These women wore black sashes with the words 'Eerbiedig ons Grondwet', which translated from Afrikaans means 'Honour our Constitution'.[47] This slogan was given to them by Professor Marais[48] and was replaced by a plain sash when the Senate Bill was passed, as they believed the law destroyed the constitution beyond repair.[49] It is unclear why and how the sashes came about as their official symbol, however they were first worn at their 18 June 1955 protest as a sash of mourning.[50] Therefore the sash was adopted early on in the organisation's existence, and remained their symbol. Nonetheless, the moniker was described as inevitable and was an honourable name.[51] It was also implied that the name was more informal and memorable, compared to the lengthy, formal League title. Of the six women who founded the Black Sash, the only one who had a political past was Jean Sinclair. The Sash also announced that creating the organisation was Sinclair's idea[52] and she was linked to the Springbok Legion, having more political experience than the rest of the Sash founders. Sinclair added a more political undertone and astuteness to the organisation.

Much like the WCTU, the Sash took it upon themselves to fight for what they believed was morally correct for society. The concept of morality is evident in the organisation's meeting minutes and the Black Sash journal. The Sash's first meeting and constitution recorded 'moral pledges' as one of the organisation's aims.[53] The Sash stated in their 1956 constitution that politics was the foundation for the 'morals of the nation',[54] addressing rights for individuals and the wider public. Their motivation to fight against the bill was they could not support legislation that was

[44] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, A., Constitution, March 1956, p. 1.
[45] Davenport, and Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, p. 396
[46] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, J.1.1.1, The Sunday Times, 13 November 1955, p. 1.
[47] Black Sash, 'The Story of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League', *Black Sash* Journal 1 (1) (January 1956), p. 6.
[48] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, Chairwomen's report to the first annual conference of the Women's Defense of the Constitution League, April 1956, p. 2.
[49] Ibid, p. 4.
[50] Rogers, *The Black Sash: South African's Fight for Democracy*, p. 42.
[51] Black Sash, 'Introducing our Group', *Black Sash* Journal 1 (1) (January 1956), p. 2.
[52] Black Sash, 'The Story of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League', *Black Sash Journal* 1 (1) (January 1956), p. 6.
[53] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, A. Constitution 1955, p. 1.
[54] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, B. Black Sash principles, 1956.

'politically right if it is morally wrong'.[55] Therefore the Sash were conscious of the racial shortcomings of South Africa's apartheid laws.

The Sash wanted to preserve the constitution created in the Union of South Africa in 1910, describing it as a document written by South African forefathers, who believed in 'strength through unity' where sincerity was present, due to their own past and battles in unifying South Africa.[56] Part of this 'sincerity' was about maintaining the coloured people's votes. The Sash saw the apartheid government as a minority government that consisted of leaders who abused their power, through implementing racially divisive laws while undermining the constitution.[57] This helps one understand why the Sash had a romanticised approach towards the 1910 Union's constitution, which was interpreted as more democratic and fair compared to the legalised racism that was apartheid.

Increasing women's political voice

By the 1950s a 'new consciousness'[58] emerged in South Africa, which saw women challenge their domestic roles and move to forge new roles in society. This created an opportunity to further politically organise themselves more so than ever before. New consciousness implies there is a new mind- set and objective in changing how one addresses political issues, which set the foundation for the emergence of women's organisations the FEDSAW and Black Sash. However, on reflection, this new consciousness was a gradual process. South African women started protesting about issues such as suffrage by the late nineteenth century and were gradually developing their political voices. Hilda Bernstein claimed that women's organisations were always part of political movements in South Africa because they experienced and had an understanding of reforms that restructured the country under apartheid.[59] Women shifted their roles from being passive actors to actively reacting to the South African political and racial context.

FEDSAW and the Black Sash found inspiration from earlier women's organisations involved in politics that addressed global and domestic issues, and

[55] Rogers, *The Black Sash: South African's Fight for Democracy*, p. vii.
[56] Black Sash, 'Introducing our Group', *Black Sash Journal* 1 (1) (January 1956), p. 2.
[57] Ibid.
[58] International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, Reference: Africa Labour Warwick, 194-197, " 'Women and Resistance' A Critical", October 1984, p. 25.
[59] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 81.

observed how they harnessed women's diverse roles, regardless of race, cultural background or occupation in their protests. Leaders from both centuries, such as Solomon, Schreiner, Joseph and Alexander, believed women had a duty and responsibility to South Africans by improving South African politics. There was a belief that women must play their 'full part'[60] to overcome the different forms of discrimination implemented by apartheid. Therefore, women were being recognised as leaders, 'not just wives of men'.[61] There was a sense of empowerment and the ability to enforce change, where women had the power to contribute positively and politically to organisations and later the national liberation movement that formally fought against apartheid in the 1950s. This also reinforced the need for women's organisations. The FEDSAW believed women had the right to organise meetings and speak publicly, [62] which was previously looked down upon by the NP government, just as their predecessors felt the need to speak up and challenge the government.

Like the WEL, WEAU, WCTU and SAVF, the Federation and Sash were exclusively women's organisations and appealed to all women whether they were mothers, wives or professional women; to make a stand against discrimination. FEDSAW did this through appealing to all women regardless of race, while the Black Sash, a whites-only organisation, focused on unifying the English and Afrikaans white populations. This is evident in the Black Sash's manifesto, which stated:

> The time has come for the Government to listen to the voice of the women of this country. We are the ones who have borne the children of today who are the South Africans of tomorrow, and who will have to bear the brunt of the sins of their fathers…. As mothers and grandmothers, as wives and sweethearts, career women and professional women, as young women looking forward to a peaceful South Africa we are uniting to take common action. As women, we intend to bring this Government to its senses. We therefore call on all

[60] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac.2.5, correspondence from Hilda Watts to FEDSAW, August 1956.
[61] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac.1.5.1, FEDSAW Inaugural address, 17 April 1954.
[62] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137 Ea.2, 'Demands put Forward by the Congress', 1955, p. 3.

> women, English or Afrikaans– speaking, to join us in this march. Let all women who value liberty and freedom heed this call to action.[63]

This manifesto demonstrates, firstly that like the FEDSAW, the Black Sash used their role as wives and mothers to further reiterate their role in society as well as highlighting their importance in creating and influencing future generations of the country. There was also recognition that women had multiple roles in society, and were therefore more influential in society had been acknowledged. From this perspective, the Sash framed maternalism as a reason for their approach in fighting against the government's racial policies. Secondly, this manifesto highlighted specifically the unification of Afrikaans and English-speaking women, with no mention of race but nonetheless implying not all women would be represented. The Black Sash, like the WEAU and SAVF, attempted to bridge the divide between white English and Afrikaans-speaking women,[64] which was prominent in South Africa in the beginning of the twentieth century. This divide existed due to the conflict between the British and Afrikaners, which was still evident at the turn of the century with The South African War (1899–1902), and the 1910 Union of South Africa, which formally united the two Boer republics (Orange Free State and the Transvaal) with the former British colonies (the Cape and Natal). By the mid-twentieth century, the political landscape changed significantly; the divide between the English and Afrikaans communities still existed but was not an urgent or pressing issue compared to the racial division in the country.

Like the SAVF and WEAU, the Sash focused on bilingualism and wanted to unify 'the European population together'.[65] Despite their efforts, there was a small minority of Afrikaans women in the Sash with maybe one or two Afrikaans members per branch,[66] thus it remained a largely English organisation.[67] The Cape Town office was the longest running Sash office that continued publishing articles in both languages and was encouraged to do so by the very few Afrikaans-speaking Black

[63] Rogers, *The Black Sash: South African's Fight for Democracy,* p. 16.
[64] Marijke Du Toit, 'The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: Volksmoeders and the ACVV, 1904–1929', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29 (1) (2003), p. 158.
[65] Black Sash, 'Introducing our Group', *Black Sash Journal* 1 (1) (January 1956), p. 1.
[66] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[67] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.

Sash members,[68] however with such little return, they resorted to only publishing their articles in English.

Within the country, women were pleading for racial and gender equality as mothers and politicising their societal roles. Petitions written by women's organisations in the earlier twentieth century until the 1950s and '60s, focused on their societal role as nurturers. The 1912 petition by the Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association, spoke of women's rights and their rights as mothers. Passes 'lowered the dignity of women'[69] and affected their rights as parents because by the time children were old enough to obtain passes, they would be independent of their parents. FEDSAW also used this stance in their petitions, and this is evident in their earlier documents, such as the Women's Charter which began with 'we, the women of South Africa, wives and mothers, working women and housewives…'[70] emphasising the multiple roles women have in society. It also emphasised how women contributed to their communities, whether through raising future generations or being employees. Furthermore, FEDSAW also used this stance in their first protest against passes in October 1955, where their petitions stated:

> We speak from our hearts as mothers, as women… for we shall not rest until we have won, for our children their fundamental rights of freedom, justice and security.[71]

The emphasis on women's pivotal roles in society was highlighted and was the motivation for the protest, being for their children and the future generations of the country. They therefore had an undeniable need to protest and protect their children and the future generations in South Africa.

The WCTU, WEL, Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association, FEDSAW and the Black Sash all used their roles as mothers and wives to help support their cause. Rosenberg describes this as 'biological essentialism',[72] which implied that women were the peacemakers, unlike men, who were exploitative

[68] Ibid.
[69] Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association petition 1912, cited in M Daymond et al., *Women Writing Africa: The Southern Region* (New York: Feminist Press: City University of New York, 2003), p. 98.
[70] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, AC.1,6.2, Women's Charter. 17 April 1954, p. 1.
[71] FEDSAW petition, *Fighting Talk,* 27 October 1955, p.3
[72] Rosenberg, *Transnational Currents in a Shrinking World 1870–1945*, p. 81.

and more militant in their approach. [73] Therefore, empowering women through becoming more active in society and politics was a way of combating conflict and finding alternative ways of coexisting with more focus on cooperation, both at a national and international level. Pleading as wives and mothers united South African women's organisations with the international arena, and would go on to connect the FEDSAW with the WIDF's International Congress of Mothers; it would also politicise their roles as mothers and wives, integrating them into international conversations and debates about broader concerns of world peace and human rights.

Earlier transnational role models

The FEDSAW and Black Sash found inspiration in key figures from the earlier South African transnational women's movement and were motivated by their actions and roles. The FEDSAW constantly referred to Olive Schreiner, while the Black Sash had a personal link to Daisy Solomon. Schreiner's literary work influenced future FEDSAW leaders in the 1940s. Ray Alexander, a founding member of FEDSAW, met a WEL member who advocated for the league and recommended Alexander read Schreiner's book *Women and Labour,* as Ray was keen to learn about the 'women and conditions in South Africa'.[74] She read this work and later attended a WEL meeting, which enabled her to meet like-minded activists and learn about other organisations such as the African Political Organisation.[75] Schreiner was Alexander's introduction to South African politics and the role women played in it, while also highlighting the transnational link South African women had with international organisations.

Alexander and FEDSAW's admiration of Schreiner was evident from the beginning of the organisation. In 1955, FEDSAW leader and national secretary, Helen Joseph, paid homage to Schreiner, labelling her the 'protagonist for the Women's Movement' in South Africa.[76] Schreiner was one of the first people to politically represent women's equality in South Africa and helped to create a women's movement that had previously ceased to exist, while representing South Africa's racial and human rights issues abroad and connecting South African

[73] Ibid.
[74] Alexander, *All my Life and All my Strength*, p. 52.
[75] Ibid., p. 53.
[76] Joseph, 'South Africa's Greatest Daughter', p. 14.

organisations such as the WEL to international organisations and events such as the International Congress of Women. Joseph recognised the importance of the earlier women's movement in helping to establish women's political organisations in the twentieth century by stating 'indeed our present has its roots in the past'.[77] Through this, Joseph admired Schreiner as a female political activist and mentioned how through these individuals, the past was linked to the then present 1950s and '60s, through similar situations of racial inequality and women's political activism. Due to this connection, recognition of women's history and participation in politics was an important foundation for women's activism in the 1950s and '60s.

One of the Federation's earliest events, on 20 March 1955, was a celebration of the 100th anniversary of Olive Schreiner's birth,[78] which that year coincided with International Women's Day. For the Federation, it was important to acknowledge and celebrate both events. One was about demonstrating women's solidarity with their international allies, while the other was about continuing the fight Schreiner had led half a century earlier for racial equality and enfranchisement for all South Africans. Both events from the Federation's perspective were interlinked and complementary to each other, highlighting the need for racial equality, and role of international connections in the fight for justice.

The fight for racial equality and enfranchisement was demonstrated in the speeches given at the event. Joseph discussed in detail conditions of African women, Schreiner's life and published works; and the upcoming Congress of Mothers meeting in Geneva[79] which the Federation would be part of. Additionally, Violet Weinberg, a former South African Communist Party (SACP) member, spoke about Schreiner's life and her contribution to literature and South African politics,[80] and emphasised Schreiner's role 'as a champion of peace, of women's rights, and of justice for all races in South Africa'.[81] This aligned with FEDSAW's aims of achieving world peace through collaboration and equality for men and women's rights as set out in the Women's Charter. By demonstrating this commonality with Schreiner, FEDSAW openly acknowledged and continued to fight for the same values as the earlier South African transnational women's movement. This verified that Schreiner

[77] Ibid.
[78] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae1.1. International Women's Day.
[79] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 66, p. 14,192.
[80] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae1.1, International Women's Day.
[81] Ibid.

was used as a role model for women in the 1950s, as organisations such as FEDSAW were still fighting for the same rights. This illustrated two important points about the Federation. Firstly, they were openly transnational from inception, where in less than a year they joined women in solidarity by celebrating International Women's Day with their comrades in the WIDF. Secondly, the Federation looked to Schreiner as a role model and used her life achievements and actions as inspiration for their own organisational aims. The Federation looked back to the early pioneers of female activists fighting for human rights and equality and continued their fight, while also responding to a changing South African context.

Schreiner's fearlessness in being a politically active woman while fighting for human rights and racial equality was something the multiracial Federation could relate to. Joseph described her as 'being opposed to inequalities of any kind but particularly those which were based on colour'.[82] This was said in an assumption based on her publications and past, that Schreiner would have supported the Federation's aims and efforts if she were alive in the 1950s. Through her publications, which were available internationally, it became apparent that Schreiner's belief in racial equality was progressive for her time, and FEDSAW drew inspiration from her vision and impact, both nationally and internationally.

This leads to the question: why was Schreiner specifically celebrated compared to other pioneer women activists in South Africa? Joseph's introduction to Schreiner was through her book *Women and Labour*, which sparked an interest in her insights and publications and achievements.[83] This is much like Alexander's first introduction to Schreiner and her publications. The Federation saw similarities between their work and Schreiner's life. Both were radically challenging the government for racial equality and women's roles in society; they both believed in multiracial collaborations as well as the importance of international partnerships. Schreiner personified the values the Federation wanted to continue as an organisation.

Similarly, the Black Sash looked to a key individual who was younger during the earlier women's movement, albeit not as well-known as Schreiner. Daisy Solomon was involved in the earlier women's movement and fought for suffrage both

[82] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records, Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 66, p. 14,192.
[83] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records, Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 66, p. 14,192.

in South Africa and the UK.[84] She was descended from a long line of activists, specifically her mother Georgiana Solomon, president of SAVF and a WSPU member, and her first cousin Emilie Solomon was the WCTU president and WWCTU vice president. Both of these women influenced Daisy to become involved in fighting for human rights for men and women. The Solomon's were focused on inclusiveness rather than racial exclusivity; Emilie fought for multiracial votes while Georgiana fought for multi-cultural cooperation between the Afrikaans and English-speaking women in the early twentieth century. Having politically active family members, and being exposed to these organisations, had a direct impact on Daisy.

Daisy's involvement in the South African transnational women's movement can be traced to the first wave of feminism at the turn of the century. Solomon travelled extensively between South Africa and London, and was very involved in other international organisations. She was the vice president of the British Commonwealth League, chairman and trustee of the Olive Schreiner Scholarship Fund Committee, the honorary secretary of the Hampstead Branch of the WSPU and a member of the parliamentary committee of the National Council of Women.[85] She also travelled to India where she was part of an All-India Women conference. Being so active internationally enabled Solomon to bring international awareness and create links with the Sash, although it was something the Sash did not pursue beyond 1957. Solomon was a Sash member at the False Bay (Western Cape) branch but was not overly involved in the organisation. While the Black Sash were proud to have her as a member, she was someone who was called on to speak at meetings, rather than dedicating her life to the Sash.[86] Solomon was in some ways an honorary member who brought her extensive experience from abroad, educating the organisation.

With her transnational experience and personal contacts abroad and in South Africa, Solomon was an important figure in creating the link between the Black Sash and the international women's movement in the 1950s. The Sash acknowledged her contribution to the earlier South African women's movement and its representation internationally in their October 1959 journal, where they dedicated two pages to past women's struggles. It was in this article that the Sash discussed Emmeline Pankhurst's role in the international fight for women's suffrage, however there was

[84] M.J Grant, 'Daisy Solomon Obituary/, *Black Sash Journal*, 20 (2) (August 1978), p. 10.
[85] Black Sash, 'Personality Parade– Miss Daisy Solomon', *Black Sash Journal* 2 (10) (December 1957), p. 5.
[86] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.

also acknowledgement of past South African women activists such as Olive Schreiner and Daisy Solomon,[87] stating 'their valuable work was linked to international organisations'.[88] The Sash understood that Schreiner and Solomon responded to a different context and fought for votes for all women regardless of race, however by the 1950s, the majority of women still did not have the vote under apartheid. By discussing that Schreiner and Solomon's work was linked to international organisations, the Sash were reiterating that their position in the late 1950s was one fighting for human rights in South Africa, rather than for women's suffrage.

The Springbok Legion, Torch Commando and Defiance Campaign as Political Inspiration

Alongside finding inspiration from past leaders in the South African transnational women's movement and their causes, motivation came from newer organisations that embodied the collaborative fight for human rights. In the 1950s, the political context in South Africa was gradually changing. Opposition parties realised the importance of uniting against apartheid. White organisations such as the Springbok Legion (a predecessor to the Torch Commando) consisted of ex-servicemen and women who fought against racial discrimination. It was the largest white organisation against apartheid.[89]

Black Sash founders and members were linked to the Springbok Legion and were influenced by the Torch Commando. The Springbok Legion, created in 1941, was described as a 'soldier's trade union'[90] and consisted of former service–men in opposition to segregationist laws.[91] The Legion was open to ex-servicemen and women of all races, however it dissolved by 1947 as the Cold War intensified and new challenges faced the white population in South Africa, namely apartheid, which meant it was becoming increasingly difficult to mobilise white support.

The legion was short lived and was an outlet for white influence. Its legacy lived on in another organisation. Legion members were involved in the creation of

[87] Black Sash, 'The Women Militant', *Black Sash Journal* 3 (22) (October 1959), p. 11.
[88] Ibid., p. 12.
[89] Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, p. 35.
[90] Ibid., p. 19.
[91] Ibid., p. 35.

and early campaigning for the Torch Commando,[92] created in 1951. This was a predominantly white organisation of ex-servicemen and women from the Second World War, who opposed the government's suggestion of removing coloured people from the voter's common roll.[93] The latter was a concern for Torch members because they had fought in the war alongside their coloured colleagues and felt it was undemocratic to strip them of their legal rights. Many of the founding members in the Sash had been in active service[94] either in Europe or South Africa, which galvanised them to take action against the Senate Bill. While the Torch Commando was short lived, it inspired its members to continue to fight for coloured people's rights.

Black Sash members were directly involved and influenced by the Springbok Legion and the Torch Commando. Founding members such as Jean Sinclair, who would go on to become Black Sash national president in 1961, were active in the Springbok Legion[95] and influenced by the Torch Commando. The Black Sash acknowledged it was also Sinclair's idea to create the organisation, giving white women the opportunity to keep coloured people on the Common Voters' Roll,[96] somewhat challenging the Sash's apolitical label. The Sash's direct link to the Springbok Legion and Torch Commando, some of the earliest white anti-apartheid organisations in South Africa, demonstrated that the Sash was intrinsically an active part of anti-apartheid activism and was politicised to some extent, whether they admitted it or not.

The Springbok Legion and Torch Commando also inspired future FEDSAW leaders. Joseph was aware of and impressed with the Springbok Legion and Torch Commando.[97] While she never became a member of either organisation, she marched in the Torch Commando processions[98] and supported their cause. Likewise, Joseph and Ngoyi supported the Defiance Campaign, which they both admitted further spurred on their interest in getting involved in South African politics.[99]

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[92] Ibid., p. 100.
[93] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records, Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,995.
[94] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[95] Black Sash, 'The Story of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League', *Black Sash Journal* 1 (1) (January 1956), p. 6.
[96] Ibid.
[97] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A2551, A.1, Transcript with Helen Joseph, 1986, p. 32.
[98] Ibid., p. 46.
[99] Unit on Apartheid, UN report, 'Women Against Apartheid in South Africa', Digital Innovation South Africa (DISA), November 1975, p15, http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/sites/default/files/pdf_files/rep19751100.037.051.001.pdf, accessed 19 October 2013.

The Defiance Campaign united organisations to fight against apartheid. On 26 June 1952, the SAIC and ANC created the Defiance Campaign, a passive resistance movement[100] that aimed to fight for racial equality through breaking the law to deliberately get arrested. They broke the law through burning passes and refused to conform to apartheid legislation.[101] The Campaign was termed as 'mass politics'[102] where multiple opposition parties worked together for the first time in South Africa with the same goal of abolishing discrimination; people from all races in got involved in the campaign.[103] The SAIC-ANC had a formal alliance, and had representation by the Franchise Action Committee (FRAC), predecessor of SACPO.

The Defiance Campaign unified opposition parties, men and women from all races, to protest against the government. The SAIC and ANC called on white support during the campaign[104] and according to Joseph, this led to the creation of the Congress of Democrats and the South African Liberal Party, [105] further strengthening the national liberation movement.

The campaign was short lived, lasting until 1953, but had a significant impact on those who would go on to lead opposition organisations. Campaign members would also be volunteers for the Congress campaign in 1955.[106] The campaign inspired the public to organise themselves and inspired the creation of the Congress Alliance, a political coalition against apartheid, which was starting to form in the background in 1952. The campaign mobilised more people into the ANC, increasing it by 100,000 people,[107] rather than advocating passive resistance,[108] and had a strong hold in the Eastern Cape,[109] which provided strong support for the ANC. It was well received in the Transvaal which also had a strong ANC following.[110] The Defiance Campaign galvanised people into action and inspired women to challenge the political system.

In the same year, South African women started discussing the need to create a new organisation that represented all South African women. Women felt that by

[100] Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism,* p. 35.
[101] Baruch Hirson, 'The Defiance Campaign, 1952: Social Struggle or Party stratagem?', in *Searchlight South Africa*, Vol. 1, No. 1m September 1988, p 75.
[102] Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism,* p. 35.
[103] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Cb1.5.6, p. 7.
[104] Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism,* p. 72.
[105] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records, Reference, AD 1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,952.
[106] Davenport, and Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, p. 403.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism,* p. 94.
[109] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A2551, A.1, Transcript with Helen Joseph, 1986, p. 35.
[110] Ibid., p. 40.

1953, 'conditions were ripe' to create a new women's organisation.[111] The campaign influenced future FEDSAW leaders and members, which politically liberated and inspired them. Fatima Meer, a leader in the SAIC, discussed how both passive resistance and the Defiance Campaign gave Indian women the opportunity to take part in politics,[112] while Bertha Mkhize and Florence Matomela, both from the ANCWL and both of whom became vice-presidents of FEDSAW in 1954, were actively part of the Defiance Campaign, with Matomela being arrested in Port Elizabeth due to her involvement in organising the campaign.[113] Additionally, Joseph stated that she was deeply affected by the campaign and it encouraged her to be more politically active.[114] Passive resistance resonated with Joseph as she lived in India for a short time as a teacher, where she learnt about it and also developed compassion for Indian people's plight in South Africa.[115] She joined the Congress of Democrats soon after the campaign ended as she felt they 'stood uncompromisingly for equality and for justice for all people'.[116] Similarly, Ngoyi found the same inspiration to become politically active from the Defiance Campaign.[117] This campaign was important not only as a way of unifying people of all races, but it gave women a new voice and the courage to formally unite against apartheid.

The Defiance Campaign aimed to politicise people against apartheid. The campaign was 'not about the number of people you have to measure success, you measure your success by the number of people you have politicised'.[118] The campaign was used to encourage and influence people to become more politically active, just as it had done with Joseph. It also influenced women to become involved in politics, with female members of the Defiance Campaign going to jail, and many also attended FEDSAW's inaugural conference.[119] It encouraged women in

[111] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.6.1, Inaugural conference, FEDSAW report, April 1954, p. 2.
[112] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.5.1, Inaugural conference speeches, April 1954, p 5.
[113] Rhodes University, Cory Library, Pamphlet box 148, United Nations Unit on Apartheid, Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, 'Women Against Apartheid', November 1975, p. 6.
[114] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records, Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,918.
[115] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A2551, A.1, Transcript with Helen Joseph, 1986, p. 26.
[116] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records, Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,920.
[117] Unit on Apartheid, UN report, 'Women Against Apartheid in South Africa', Digital Innovation South Africa (DISA), November 1975, p15, http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/sites/default/files/pdf_files/rep19751100.037.051.001.pdf, accessed 19 October 2013.
[118] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A2551, A.1, Transcript with Helen Joseph, 1986.
[119] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.5.1, Inaugural conference speeches, p. 4.

particular to take a political stand against discrimination and formally align themselves with the national liberation movement.

The campaign's message of political and racial harmony and justice was an example the Federation would go on to follow. FEDSAW defined themselves as an all-inclusive organisation that united all South African women regardless of their political stance, race or class, and 'they fought for equality and friendship between men and women.'[120] The deliberate word 'friendship' signified it was a mutual, equal relationship based on respect and establishes there was something positive, collaborative and joint in the struggle. From its initial meeting, the Federation embraced cultural and racial diversity from its audience. The FEDSAW stated 'we are not divided by our differences, but united by our common needs'.[121] The latter included human rights as women, the aim for a better future for their children and so forth. The benefits of diversity in the organisation meant the Federation had greater exposure to different audiences in society, but also that they were truly representative of the different types of roles women in South Africa had.

Like the Federation, the Defiance Campaign understood the importance of international links and the role of transnationalism in maximising their impact. In addition to strengthening the liberation movement, uniting non-Europeans to fight in the struggle and increasing awareness about the struggle amongst whites,[122] they also intended to get the international community's attention towards South Africa's discriminatory laws.[123] The campaign wanted to use their international influence and demonstrate to an international community that there were South Africans of all races, including whites, who did not support apartheid.

Both organisations contributed to the mass mobilisation of white people during apartheid, and inspired engagement to speak up against the government's draconian laws. These organisations influenced each other, where previous members from the Springbok Legion endorsed the Defiance Campaign.[124] However what is also clear is the commonalities Sash and FEDSAW leaders had, influenced by past organisations

[120] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea1.1, Congress of the People, letter from Helen Joseph to FEDSAW members, 25 May 1955.
[121] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea2, 'Demands put Forward by the Congress', 1955, p. 3.
[122] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records, Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,995.
[123] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A2551, A.1, Transcript with Helen Joseph, 1986.
[124] Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism,* p. 102.

that encouraged them to become politically active and fight against discrimination, while taking the fight to an international stage in order to garner further support.

Conclusion

Organisations such as the WCTU and WEL created the foundations for women to become politically active in South Africa during apartheid, while illustrating the impact of transnationalism, and how their international links could be used to help them deliver their aims and shape their direction. Transnationalism contributed to the creation of the earlier women's movement; by the 1950s, women looked back at how their predecessors had fought against discrimination, organised themselves, worked alongside other political organisations and ultimately raised their political profiles in society.

The FEDSAW and Black Sash looked to key figures from the past women's movement, specifically Olive Schreiner and Daisy Solomon. Schreiner, a well-known activist and author in the nineteenth century, was politically active until the twentieth century. Her book, *Women and Labour*, influenced future prominent FEDSAW leaders such as Ray Alexander and Helen Joseph to question and challenge women's roles in society and the role of race in South Africa. Schreiner was well–connected with various international organisations and influential personal contacts, and used transnationalism as a way of furthering her own political development as well as connecting South Africa to wider international debates and discussions about human rights, women's votes and world peace, much like the FEDSAW would in the 1950s. Additionally, Schreiner's approach to racial politics was one of inclusion. She believed all women should have the right to vote, as should all men, regardless of race. With this view, she was seen as radical for making these suggestions in a period where women were not politically active and the political context was focused more on segregation rather than unity. The FEDSAW looked to Schreiner's attitude and actions of multiracial justice and her proactive approach of networking with the international community.

Similarly, the Sash also found inspiration from a political activist from the earlier part of the twentieth century. Solomon had extensive experience of fighting for women's rights and human rights, both in South Africa and abroad. Solomon's family

were involved in various organisations such as the Suid Afrikaans Vrouwe Federasie (SAVF), WCTU, WSPU and the British Dominion Women's Citizen Union, which shaped her perspective on women's roles in a national and international context. Solomon was a younger role model and was alive when apartheid was implemented. She became a Black Sash member in the 1950s, however was not active in the protests, but rather an occasional guest speaker at events. Nonetheless, Solomon was the bridge between the Sash and the earlier transnational women's movement, connecting them to the international setting. Both role models connected organisations with specific international themes; Schreiner focused on race relations and equality, and inspired women with her literature whereas Solomon linked the Sash to suffrage and women's vote, which was more in line with the issues British women faced.

Additionally, both organisations responded to content–specific issues such as passes and racial discrimination, which became their driving force and aims. The FEDSAW was influenced by the 1913 Orange Free State Native and Coloured Women's Association, which organised the country's first formal protest against passes and was also one of the earliest multiracial women's organisations in South Africa. By the 1950s, the threat of passes for women re-emerged, empowering the Federation to create anti-pass campaigns, which they were later defined by. In comparison, the Black Sash fought against removing coloured people from the Common Voters' Roll when the government proposed a new bill to enlarge the Senate, therefore increasing the proportion of white voters to increase the probability of apartheid laws being passed. Some Sash members had experience of being in the Springbok Legion and were openly influenced by the Torch Commando. The Legion and Commando were comprised of ex-servicemen and women who fought for their coloured colleagues to maintain their right to vote after the government threatened to remove them from the Common Voters' Roll.

As well as taking inspiration from past women's political activities, the Federation and Black Sash were inspired by organisations that were responding to and opposed legalised racism in South Africa. Apartheid further drove South African women to get involved in local politics and campaigns. Political organisations from the 1940s and '50s directly influenced both organisations. The FEDSAW was inspired by the multiracial and multiparty Defiance Campaign, which tried to politicise as many people as possible, with the aim of protesting against apartheid laws while

also trying to get international attention for their actions. The campaign was the first formal organisation between two political parties that fought against apartheid and openly challenged the government through deliberately breaking apartheid laws. Similarly, the Black Sash and some FEDSAW members took inspiration from the Springbok Legion and Torch Commando, made up of white ex-servicemen and women who fought to keep their coloured colleagues who served with them on the Common Voters' Roll.

With all of these points in mind, FEDSAW and Black Sash were an extension of the earlier South African transnational women's movement and built upon the blueprint that was created by the earlier generation. While they were influenced and shaped by more recent political organisations from the 1940s and '50s, they also learnt from and understood the importance of transnationalism by taking cues from key individuals from the earlier movement who were fundamental in transnational women's organisations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They further adapted these cues to define their aims and whether they consisted of multiracial membership. Inspiration from past leaders, organisations and events contributed and ultimately formed their ideological stance during their politically active years, shaping their approach to international organisations and redefining their role in anti-apartheid activism.

Chapter 3 : Shifting ideologies: The Black Sash and FEDSAW

Introduction

The FEDSAW and Black Sash were the two most prominent women's organisations in the 1950s, fighting for human rights and against apartheid. While they had the commonality of fighting against apartheid, they differed in their motives, structure, membership criteria and methods. Both organisations went through an ideological evolution in the 1950s where their identities were challenged and aims adapted to the surrounding political context. South Africa's racial policies would go on to shape how the organisations interacted with international organisations, and which organisations they would ultimately network with. Both the FEDSAW and Black Sash's shift in thinking and functioning have been analysed at a local level in terms of how the organisations adjusted their aims to accommodate national political changes, however their ideological evolution has not been extensively analysed as a way of understanding how this had an impact on their transnational connections and alliances with other organisations. While few scholars have explored their change in focus, historians have not addressed how their ideologies evolved and adapted/changed over this period and how it set them up for transnational interactions.

The FEDSAW's international links and engagements were an indication of how its identity evolved in a few short years, from its original intended emphasis on women's rights, to anti-apartheid activism, world peace and democracy. This evolution was swift, from the Federation's inception to its inaugural conference. FEDSAW was initially created as a feminist organisation with a primary focus on advocating for women's rights. However, within a year, the focus and emphasis on feminism dissipated when the Federation had its official inaugural conference and set its aims, as highlighted in the Women's Charter. The Women's Charter was significant in highlighting the complexity of women's roles in society, alongside the challenges of apartheid and fighting for human rights. The charter itself declared eight aims that the Federation would fight for, starting initially with the individual's role in society and gradually panning out to the national and international fight for world peace and international cooperation. It was with this document that the

Federation made clear that transnational connections and cooperation were pivotal for their functioning as well as their contribution to the national liberation movement.

FEDSAW placed their new organisation within the national liberation movement, with the aim of fighting discrimination against all South Africans nationally, while striving to work with like-minded organisations abroad in the attempt to maintain world peace. It was with these aims, adopted at the inaugural conferences, that the Federation assumed its place within a wider setting, focusing on a transnational perspective, as an active part of the wider community.

The FEDSAW's aims were put into action as soon as the organisation was established. Their inclusive nature was demonstrated in their membership, where the organisation was accommodating and tolerant of all organisations that wanted to fight against apartheid. This was personified in the documents they contributed to and aligned themselves with, such as the Women's Charter and Freedom Charter. The latter was seen to have a wider impact on national and international fronts. It was a charter that formally bound the opposition parties against apartheid, creating a common goal of freedom for all South Africans regardless of sex or race. Due to all the political organisations affiliated with the Freedom Charter, the document itself reached more countries, networks and organisations. The Federation's role in the Freedom Charter was significant as they were recognised as part of the liberation movement, showing commitment to anti-apartheid activism and women's active political roles in the 1950s.

By contrast, the Black Sash's ideology took several years to evolve. It was initially an organisation that worked in isolation and was focused on fighting against the Senate Bill, which proposed enlarging the Senate to decrease the impact of the black vote in the Cape. However, by 1957 there was discontent amongst its members. Some felt they had moved away from their original aims of fighting against the Senate Bill, while others felt the Sash should broaden out and fight against apartheid more generally, joining the wider national liberation movement. By 1958, the Sash had started to collaborate more with other organisations such as the FEDSAW and PAC, even aligning themselves with the Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and forming more collaborations such as the Cape Association for the Abolition of Passes for South African Women (CATAPAW) with other political parties against apartheid.

The Sash were heavily criticised for their white women only membership, which left other organisations and key individuals spear–heading the women's movement in South Africa questioning who the Sash were and where they belonged in South African politics. Their racial exclusivity meant they were isolated from the wider liberation movement and had limited first-hand experience of discriminatory apartheid laws. However, the Sash believed their strength as white women lay precisely in the fact they were able to vote in South Africa and had electoral leverage. Being an isolating organisation was reflected in the nature of their transnational interactions and what they took from international events, which will be discussed in chapter five.

This chapter adds a new perspective to the understanding of FEDSAW and Black Sash's ideology, drawing attention to their aims, the significance of their transnational links and how they structured their organisations to interact with anti–apartheid activism and the wider transnational audience. In order to fully understand and explain their ideological development, this chapter is divided between the two organisations, beginning with the FEDSAW and its link to feminism, followed by its ideological implementation. Thereafter, the Black Sash is analysed, by understanding its emergence and debates within the Sash itself and wider political context. This will be followed by an analysis of their ideological stance in practice with reference to their protests. Lastly the Sash and FEDSAW's commitment to the UDHR as a commonality that bound them to a transnational audience will be discussed. This chapter argues that each organisation's ideological development shaped how they interacted and engaged transnationally and aligned themselves with international organisations.

The beginning of a feminist or transnational organisation? FEDSAW's Women's Charter

The FEDSAW was created with the intension of becoming a feminist organisation. However, by the time the Federation had its inaugural conference, this focus had shifted to becoming an active part of the national liberation movement and creating transnational connections to fight for human rights. Before the inauguration, the concept of the Federation was still debated amongst founding members. FEDSAW's proposed name was the Union of South African Women and the plan

was to adhere to a document that would be central to their existence, the Women's Charter. The Women's Charter and inaugural conference demonstrate the FEDSAW's change in ideology.

There was a sense of urgency in setting up the Federation. Ray Alexander was impatient to set up the Federation and adopt the Women's Charter. In planning the inaugural conference, Alexander impatiently wrote to Hilda Bernstein, stating 'please reply to my letters. I want to know whether you received them and we must get on with the job.'[1] The job she was referring to was women's representation in South African politics. Alexander's impatience about setting up the organisation was never subtle in her correspondence and comes through clearly as a common theme. Trade unionists heavily involved in setting up the FEDSAW included Baard from Port Elizabeth and Martha Nqxesha from East London, both from the FCWU, who worked alongside Alexander.[2] Created in 1954, the Federation represented collaboration and unity, as it was the first and only multiracial women's organisation in the 1950s. Women were more organised than before and this made a strong impact.[3] The FEDSAW accepted women into the organisation regardless of their class, creed, race or political party. Representatives were present from all the opposition parties within the Federation.

Unlike the Black Sash, the Federation was an organisation that was openly politicised. Not only was it an organisation that was created by politically active women, but the organisation itself 'developed politically in the context of the liberation struggle'[4] where FEDSAW believed all women had common interests and strong political attitudes.[5] These women were bold, and unapologetically challenged the government directly, opposing discriminatory laws.

The Women's Charter, created by Alexander and Bernstein, was adopted at FEDSAW's inauguration in 1954, setting out the overall aims of the organisation. These included eight main aims including: the right to vote; the right to employment equality; the right to equal rights with men in relation to property, marriage and children; free and compulsory education for all children to promote their development; the removal of laws that prohibit one's movement; to build and

[1] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ad1.2, correspondence from Ray Alexander to Hilda Bernstein, 2 February1954.
[2] Berger, *Threads of Solidarity,* p. 207.
[3] International Institute of Social History, Africa Labour Warwick, South African Report, 194-197, article by Bozzolli. p. 29.
[4] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ab.3, 'Federation of Women', p. 2.
[5] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 87.

strengthen the women's movement in the national liberation movement; to cooperate with other organisations with similar aims in South Africa and the rest of the world; and lastly to strive for peace throughout the world.[6] These objectives, while ambitious, demonstrate the wide array of issues the Federation wanted to address at both a local and international level. In this sense, the charter was a progressive document that advocated equality between the sexes through the eight main aims, while challenging women's roles in society by including them as part of the national liberation struggle.

These broad aims have left scholars debating the overall purpose of the Charter and how this places the FEDSAW ideologically in the 1950s. Walker, in particular, questions the Charter's link to feminism and human rights. Some academics have claimed it was a feminist document, linking the Federation to the wider feminist movement. Within the Charter, there are the debates about the South African women's movement and its feminist links.[7] Tong defines feminism as 'attempts to understand women's oppression, to explain its causes and consequences, and to prescribe strategies for women's liberation.'[8] With this in mind, historians such as Walker, have been criticised for labelling the FEDSAW as a feminist organisation solely because it was made up of women and was a women's only organisation.[9] Additionally, Walker claimed the charter was linked to sexual equality.[10] On further analysis, however, the document is also about racial and class equality, political solidarity, and being part of the national liberation movement and wider international movement. This is illustrated in the charter's appeal to 'progressive organisations' such as churches, education and welfare organisations, thereby encouraging women and men from varied organisations to join the Congress Alliance in fighting in the national liberation movement.

This perspective has been challenged. Some scholars maintain the charter is focused more on human rights rather than only on women's rights. The document was described as FEDSAW's manifesto, created as the philosophy behind the organisation[11] and supported the FEDSAW's broad aim, which was 'for the purpose

[6] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ad1.5.4, The Women's Charter, 17 April 1954.
[7] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p.156.
[8] Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive introduction* (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 1.
[9] Institute for Social History, Amsterdam, African Labour Warwick 194-197, South African report, ' Women and Resistance: A Critical Review, October 1984, p. 28.
[10] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p.156
[11] Ibid., 153.

of uniting all women in common action for the removal of all political, legal, economic and social disabilities.'[12] The emphasis on 'all' discrimination demonstrates how they were focused on all South Africans rather than exclusively women. The Federation understood that 'the struggle for women's rights was therefore part of the struggle for the emancipation of the Coloured, African and Indian people, and the working class as a whole.'[13] The Women's Charter brought attention to the two-fold nature of oppression (being nationalism and patriarchy) and brought human rights to the forefront of women's political activism, linking back to earlier South African leaders such as Schreiner.[14] Therefore, the Charter was more than a feminist document, as it placed the Federation in a position where women advocated for human rights in South Africa and abroad.

The debate about whether the Federation was a feminist organisation stems from the tone of the document, and reflects the attitudes and perspectives of the two main activists who wrote the Charter. Alexander and Bernstein worked on the Women's Charter for over a year and believed the document would be the centre of the organisation.[15] They believed the charter should be the heart of the organisation, and would ultimately define the FEDSAW's role in creating and leading the South African women's movement in the 1950s.

There was a battle, nonetheless, to balance Alexander and Bernstein's perspectives in the charter. Both believed the charter should play a central role in the organisation, but they disagreed on what the underlying message should be. On one hand, Alexander's dominant voice advocating feminism is present, as is Bernstein's perspective of being more inclusive in the organisation. This was further revealed in FEDSAW's circular letter. Alexander was already politically banned by the government, and ended a letter of encouragement to the Federation with the words 'long live women's emancipation and long live the struggle for peace and national liberation'.[16] For Alexander, the Federation's first priority was women's rights, and the wider national struggle was secondary. However, Bernstein challenged this,

[12] FEDSAW 'Report of the First National Conference of Women' in Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 153.
[13] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ab.1, Correspondence from FEDSAW's National Executive Committee to the ANC's Secretary General, 23 May 1955, p. 1.
[14] M.J. Daymond, Dorothy Driver, Sheila Meintjes, Lebola Molema, Chiedza Musengezi, Margie Orford and Nobantu Rasebotsa, *Women Writing Africa: The Southern Region* (New York: Feminist Press: City University of New York, 2003), p. 236.
[15] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ad1.2, correspondence from Ray Alexander to Hilda Bernstein, 2 February1954.
[16] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.8.2, FEDSAW circular letter written by Ray Alexander, 25 October 1954.

believing the Federation's primary role was to fight in the national liberation movement alongside comrades for all South Africans' rights. According to Bernstein, FEDSAW's objectives were clear, with an emphasis on progressing South African society towards democratic practices,[17] implying that unity towards progress was a national and international effort, where they wanted to fight primarily against apartheid while also fighting against women's discrimination.[18] This swapped the Federation's priorities to first the national liberation struggle and thereafter women's rights, which is how the Federation ended up functioning in the 1950s.

Though the Women's Charter has been labelled as a feminist document, it also has a clear transnational element to it where it was focused on world peace and working with similar organisations abroad. Alexander had strong connections with international organisations abroad mainly the WIDF, and was invited to their Copenhagen meeting 1953.[19] This enabled the future FEDSAW to assume its position in the broader women's movement just as they assumed their position in the national liberation movement. From this perspective, the Women's Charter could have indirectly been influenced by external influences such as the WIDF.

Racial oppression in South Africa was felt amongst women who 'share the [same] problems and anxieties as our men,'[20] suggesting that this was not only a women's issue. This also reinforces both Alexander and Bernstein's voices in the document, where women's rights sit alongside concerns for equality, justice and peace, nationally and internationally, thereby highlighting their wider commitment to these values in South African society as well as the wider international community. The composition of the document supports the latter point as all the aims listed are related to those in South African society, regardless of sex. For example, the first few aims listed on the Women's Charter are the right to vote, right to employment equality and ability to move freely in the country.[21] This applied to non-white men and women who did not have these rights in society.

The document also highlighted the importance of FEDSAW's commitment to the international community. The charter's last two aims stated that the Federation wanted to work alongside South African and international organisations with similar

[17] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ad1.5.4, The Women's Charter, 17 April 1954.
[18] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 87.
[19] Alexander, *All my Life and All my Strength*, p. 248.
[20] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ad1.5.4, The Women's Charter, 17 April 1954.
[21] Ibid.

aims as well as strive for world peace.[22] This signified that the Federation was willing to collaborate with other organisations nationally and internationally, and network with like-minded organisations. The FEDSAW believed international links and anti-apartheid activism were interlinked and complemented each other. This was clear in the charter where both were mentioned in the overall aims, but also in the way the aims were presented in the document. There was a logical flow to how the aims were connected to each other. The document started with the individual's role and their right to vote, thereafter broadening out to the national role of working with similar organisations, and ended with an international contribution of collaboration and striving for world peace.

The impact of this charter was very limited and it was not referred to again other than at the inaugural conference. The words 'Women's Charter' are barely mentioned in correspondence or minutes. Instead, emphasis was put on co-operation with other organisations in the national liberation movement rather than working politically in isolation. Through correspondence with the ANC, the charter was implied in a letter, which mentioned the need to 'build and strengthen the women's sections in the national liberation movement' and trade unions,[23] reiterating women's roles in the national liberation movement and cooperating with other organisations. This reveals that the FEDSAW, like the Black Sash, had an ideological shift in the organisation very early on. They were an organisation that intended to be feminist in nature, but soon realised this would isolate women from wider politics this was not a priority in South Africa's racially torn society, where basic human rights for all were not being met.

It is with this approach, that one can start to understand the Federation as a political organisation fighting for freedom and human rights, where it opposed all laws which denied human rights, especially children's rights. Women were fighting for and speaking on behalf of their children 'to strive for their future'.[24] This was explicit in a booklet about the Federation, which stated 'we will not rest until we have won for our children, their fundamental rights of freedom, justice and security.'[25] This

[22] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ad1.5.4, The Women's Charter, 17 April 1954.
[23] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, AB.1, Correspondence from FEDSAW to the ANC, 23 May 1955, p. 1.
[24] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea2, 'Demands put Forward by the Congress', 1955, p. 5.
[25] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BAP 323.34, FEDSAW booklet, 'Strijdom, you have struck a rock', date unknown, p. 16.

suggests that women were fighting for more than just their own rights, and were using their role and power as mothers to fight against apartheid. This maternal rhetoric, which will be analysed further in the next chapter, united South African women with international women's organisations in fighting for world peace.

FEDSAW recognised there were international similarities they could fight against in solidarity, but there were also specific political issues in South Africa that needed to be addressed. Joseph stated during the Treason Trial 'our needs as women are the same all over the world, but here we are divided by the colour bar'.[26] FEDSAW acknowledged the roles of women and race, this might be why the feminism ideology was not as prominent during this period. If South Africa had only been facing the challenge of women's rights and not race and class, then perhaps FEDSAW's aims would have been in line with the second wave of feminism about sexual equality.

The Federation was wary of being called feminists or being interpreted as a feminist organisation. Joseph did not see herself as a feminist and believed the ideology in South Africa was so extreme that it was pulling women away from being part of the liberation struggle.[27] She felt that women labelling themselves as feminist was an easy way to avoid the 'real struggle', referring to the national liberation struggle. Feminism was interpreted as being potentially dangerous[28] and did not help focus on the main issue of apartheid in South African politics, but rather deflected from the issues at hand.

The Federation differentiated itself from other organisations according to its inclusive nature. Race was not a barrier in FEDSAW, unlike the other opposition parties that were organised according to the colour bar.[29] This was the first multiracial, multiparty women's organisation to represent all four races in South Africa. The Federation was made up of the ANC, SACPO, FCWU, and the SAIC. It was focused solely on abolishing apartheid laws and demonstrated through its inclusiveness that it was actively part of the liberation movement and truly representative of all South Africans.

[26] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p, 13,995.
[27] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A2551, A1, Julia Frederikse transcript with Helen Joseph, 1983, p. 48.
[28] Ibid.
[29] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ab2, 'The Work of the Federation of South African Women', April 1957.

FEDSAW's inauguration on the 17th April 1954, demonstrated that there had been an ideological shift since the Women's Charter was drawn up for the Federation. From its inception, the FEDSAW believed that women were vital in the South African national liberation movement, including striving for peace.[30] The official invitation to FEDSAW's inaugural conference stated that the conference was to 'unite women of all races… discuss women's disabilities and promote women's rights.'[31] The invitation also implied women were facing a double battle where injustices and unfairness related to their children's futures were an issue as was their inequality with men.[32] This was reinforced in the Women's Charter as well as the concept that the national liberation struggle was a shared struggle regardless of race, class or sex; therefore women had the right to be involved in the political struggle.

It was clear that women faced different challenges or 'disabilities' to men related to their domestic roles and there was inequality between the sexes. However, they also had a lot in common with men, which empowered women to take part in the national liberation struggle. The inaugural invitation stated 'to make our national struggle more effective, we ask that men support us in our fight for equality…throughout history, women have struggled side by side with men for justice'.[33] This organisation was not a radical feminist one where men's roles and contributions were dismissed, it was a national struggle shared with the rest of the country, just as race and class were a struggle. There was recognition that 'women have struggled side by side with men for justice'.[34] This was symbolic as FEDSAW did not want to alienate men and saw their contribution to the struggle as an important one, which needed to be fought in partnership.

The inaugural speeches of the day demonstrated FEDSAW's shift from South African women's concerns to wider, human rights issues. The Federation was focused on finding solutions to issues concerned with 'winning equal democratic rights for men and women.'[35] The first issue that was discussed at the event was

[30] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae2.1.1, "A Call to Mothers' pamphlet, 9 August 1955.
[31] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.1, 'Conference to promote Women's Rights', 16 March 1954.
[32] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes,* p. 209.
[33] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.1, 'Conference to promote Women's Rights', 16 March 1954.
[34] Ibid.
[35] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.5.1, Ray Alexander, FEDSAW Inaugural address, 17 April 1954.

non-European voting. There were approximately 26,876 black voters (there were few voters in the Western and Eastern Cape, and none in the Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal), compared to 1,446,729 white voters in 1954.[36] These statistics, brought up in Alexander's opening speech, were used to argue that the system in South Africa was dictated by the white elite, reiterating the imbalance of power between race and class, and the importance of multiracial, all-inclusive collaboration to overcome these issues. It was also the opening context in which FEDSAW began their conference.

The speeches clarified the priority of FEDSAW's aims. Fatima Meer stated in her speech that the women's struggle was against two issues. Firstly, it was against apartheid's racial issues and secondly women's position relative to men.[37] As FEDSAW saw themselves as part of the national liberation movement, it was important for them to collaborate with men. There was recognition that apartheid affected both men and women negatively as it affected poverty, wages and employment. This was reflected in Bernstein's speech that argued that women should be working with men rather than against them to achieve their rights. 'Women had said "we will walk forward over the men" but women should work forward with men'.[38] This re-emphasised Bernstein's perspective of uniting against apartheid.

To further emphasise this partnership, the ANC was invited to attend FEDSAW's inaugural conference. Duma Nokwe, ANC member, was the only male speaker at the conference and spoke on behalf of Walter Sisulu, the ANC secretary general. Nokwe advocated the importance of women in the national struggle, affirming that all South Africans deserved equal rights.[39] Nokwe also included a transnational perspective, emphasising the Federation's place in the international community, and discussing how women's roles in China's post-feudal system had transformed them from being subordinate to active members of society, contributing to the defence force, education and so forth.[40] This was used as international inspiration while educating the audience about women's experience abroad, and challenging stereotypical roles.

[36] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.5.1, Ray Alexander, FEDSAW Inaugural address, 17 April 1954.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

FEDSAW's ideological shift was further emphasised through Bernstein's speech, where she spoke about international partnerships. Bernstein highlighted the international context and international peace, and spoke specifically about the WIDF and the united front needed to fight for peace.[41] Through this speech, there was a sense of international unity and collaboration, which the Federation felt strongly about. This speech also highlighted organisations the Federation were aligned with. The WIDF would go on to play an important role in the FEDSAW's transnational links. The Federation's inaugural conference cemented FEDSAW's ideological stance in several ways. It confirmed the Federation's structure including membership, its role in the national liberation movement, and subsequently its role in the Freedom Charter, all of which would ratify the Federation's transnational commitment before its first protest in October 1955.

The inaugural conference also confirmed the collaborative structure of the organisation including membership criteria. The collective approach was clear in the structure of the organisation as a Federation representing all women from all political parties. This posed a potential complication where the FEDSAW's criteria stated women could join the Federation so long as they were part of an organisation. Brooks claimed there were debates and tensions about membership in the Federation,[42] specifically around the issue of whether individuals needed to be members of political parties or organisations in order to join the Federation, or whether they could join on an individual basis. The FEDSAW reflected strong political attitudes and common interests between women but there was also the fear of it being autonomous as it could be competition for other organisations such as the ANCWL,[43] especially with the different membership regulations.[44]

By contrast, minutes of meetings and interview transcripts give an indication that this was not an issue or debated amongst FEDSAW members during the 1950s. FEDSAW membership was mostly through affiliated organisations, as they wanted to unite women 'in and through their organisations'.[45] However there was an exception for the Transvaal region. Many women in this region wanted to join but were not affiliated with any trade unions or political organisations. According to Joseph,

[41] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.5.1, FEDSAW Inaugural address, 17 April 1954.
[42] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes,* p. 214.
[43] Shireen Hassim, *Women's Organisations and Democracy in South Africa* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 2006), p. 25.
[44] Meintjes, 'The Women's Struggle for Equality during South Africa's Transition to Democracy', p. 51.
[45] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ab 2, 'The Work of the Federation of South African Women', April 1957, p. 2.

FEDSAW women accepted this exception and carried on focusing on their work within the organisation.[46] The Federation wanted to get on with its political aims and not get distracted by issues such as individual membership.

The FEDSAW also reassured opposition political parties that they were not competing against other political organisations and were not interested in taking members away from other affiliations. Rather, they were interested in uniting and contributing to the national liberation movement. 'It is only through our work that we shall be able to prove that we have no wish to compete with other organisations',[47] they restated that their role was to help 'strengthen all organisations in the fight for peace and liberation.' [48] Inclusiveness, collaboration and unity were the main messages and values the organisation practised and believed in. The Federation further appealed to all opposition parties to join them in their quest to represent all South African women regardless of their political affiliation. In trying to convince political parties to work with the Federation, they stated in correspondence 'you will strengthen your own organisation and hasten the day when the people of South Africa will free themselves of race and class oppression'.[49] The ANC Transvaal branch emphasised that the FEDSAW was part of the congress movement, which in itself encouraged cooperation and unity.[50] As such, the Federation, like the congress movement, unified all women from across various organisations and therefore was a fundamental part of the Congress Alliance.[51] There was no mention of gender in this correspondence or of different political aims from various organisations, but it drew on the commonalities in the fight against apartheid as a united front that represented men and women.

FEDSAW had a significant impact on the national liberation movement due to collaboration and membership numbers. The Federation unified several organisations and represented an estimated half a million women in South Africa.[52] The highest organisational membership was the ANCWL,[53] which according to

[46] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A1985, A4.3.8, Helen Joseph files, p. 5.
[47] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ad1.1, Correspondence from Dora Tamana (FEDSAW Acting National Secretary) to FEDSAW Transvaal Region, 6 November1956.
[48] Ibid.
[49] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ab1, Correspondence from FEDSAW to the ANC, 23 May 1955, p. 1.
[50] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Cb1.4.2. Bulletin for the Transvaal ANC branch, September 1956, p. 2.
[51] Ibid.
[52] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ab3, 'Federation of Women', p. 2.
[53] Ibid.

Joseph made up approximately 90% of FEDSAW.[54] The ANCWL was logistically the largest organisation in FEDSAW, so it was not surprising they made up the majority of the Federation. By the end of the conference, Ida Mtwana (ANCWL) was elected as national president, and vice presidents were Gladys Smith (Cape Housewives League) for the Western Cape, Lilian Ngoyi (ANCWL) for the Transvaal, Bertha Mkhize (ANCWL) for Natal and Florence Matomela (FCWU) for the Eastern Cape.[55] The committee members included Helen Joseph from the Congress of Democrats (COD), Ray Alexander (FCWU), Dora Tamana (SACP), Albertina Sisulu (ANCWL) and Fatima Meer (SAIC),[56] who were all politically active in the national liberation struggle. Some would continue to be politically active in exile.

Inclusion went beyond party politics and race; men also supported the Federation, especially at the inaugural conference. There was an interesting gender role reversal and a shift in dynamics, where men from the SAIC[57] organised the catering while the women had their inaugural conference.[58] Women were focused on the business at hand, being the political stance of the women's movement in South Africa during apartheid, while men were deployed to prepare and serve the food. This illustrates the re-balancing of roles FEDSAW delegates expected and were aiming for, with the support of men and male-led political parties towards the Federation.

Overall, the delegates such as Joseph believed the inaugural conference was a success.[59] Women were united beyond racial, class, creed and political boundaries, through a Federation that involved them in the national liberation movement.[60] Women finally had a dedicated organisation that was committed to their political representation in the movement against apartheid, ensuring the liberation movement was fully supported.

[54] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A2551, A1, Transcript with Helen Joseph, 1986.
[55] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.5.1, FEDSAW Inaugural address, 17 April 1954.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes,* p. 212.
[58] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 154.
[59] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A1985, A4.3.8, Helen Joseph files, p. 5
[60] Ibid.

Implementing the Federation's ideologies: FEDSAW's contribution to the national liberation movement and Freedom Charter

The FEDSAW assumed their role in the national liberation struggle with assertiveness and confirmation, whereas they did not consider feminist ideology as their aims. They did not doubt where they fitted in within the national liberation struggle. Instead they believed women's 'active participation in the national liberation movement is essential for the achievement of freedom for all South Africans irrespective of race and class.'[61] The slogan for the inaugural conference was 'forward to freedom, security, equal rights, and peace for all',[62] reiterating they were fighting for collective rights and freedoms.

Their stance on race linked them to the national liberation movement and reinforced their all-inclusive membership and goals. In a period where race was a dividing factor in South Africa, it also divided women. As the 'only multiracial women's organisation in South Africa'[63] the FEDSAW embraced all oppositional political parties. They realised they all had the common goal of achieving democracy for all. However, their perspectives on race separated them from organisations such as the National Council of Women (NCW) and Black Sash.[64] While this racial exclusivity did not reflect the FEDSAW's own political stance nor was it something the Federation wanted to replicate, it did not stop the FEDSAW trying to work with these organisations. FEDSAW made several attempts to work with the Black Sash, but 'these efforts have so far been met with no success'.[65] The FEDSAW was conscious that not all organisations would associate themselves with multiracial organisations, however this did not stop them from trying to collaborate with these organisations, so they could truly represent all South African women. In this sense, the Federation was a tolerant organisation that was focused on fighting in solidarity as women and South African citizens.

By June 1955, over a year after the Federation was created, the Freedom Charter was adopted by the Congress of the People (COPE) and united all South Africans and organisations in opposition to apartheid regardless of race or class. The

[61] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ab1, Correspondence from FEDSAW to the ANC, 23 May 1955, p. 1.
[62] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ab3, 'Federation of Women', p. 1.
[63] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ab2, 'The Work of the Federation of South African Women', April 1957, p. 1.
[64] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ba6.2.1, FEDSAW Transvaal region, date unknown, p. 2.
[65] Ibid.

Charter advocated that all South Africans had democratic rights and freedom in the country,[66] and was described as a 'liberal, democratic reform'[67] that highlighted ten freedoms all South Africans had the right to. The charter's aims included that all South Africans would have equal rights and enjoy human rights.[68] In doing so, citizens also had the right to education, work, homes, security and peace.[69] This corresponded with the rights highlighted in the women's charter and later the declaration of human rights.

The FEDSAW influenced the charter and were involved in the writing up and delivery of the document. The FEDSAW 'pledged to give the maximum support to the COPE'[70] and were involved in the creation of the charter by consulting people from grassroots levels, who did not need to be associated with any political organisation to have their say.[71] FEDSAW contributed to this by encouraging women from other organisations to hold house meetings and FEDSAW delegates would speak about the importance of the charter but also collect ideas of what women wanted represented in the charter.[72] The FEDSAW encouraged women to come forward and let their 'voices be heard'.[73] This was a rare opportunity for women to contribute to a national political document, and the FEDSAW ensured women's voices were part of this process. Additionally, the congress committee travelled throughout the country, in rural and urban areas, over the weekend and advertised the COPE and Freedom Charter. The committee collected the public's opinions so that 'when the Freedom Charter was drawn up, it encompassed those demands'.[74] Its significance was highly respected by the opposition parties and organisations, and the Charter was described as the ' most democratically constructed Magna Carta that ever existed in the world.'[75] Creating this document from grassroots levels was significant in unifying all South Africans regardless of race, creed, sex or class, while the Women's Charter was seen as a document focused on women's rights.

[66] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea6, Freedom Charter, p. 1.
[67] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p.184
[68] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea6, Freedom Charter, p. 1.
[69] Ibid.
[70] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F5, Vol 13, p. 2518.
[71] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A1985, A2, speech by Helen Joseph, 6 December 1974, Gandhi Hall, p. 7.
[72] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea1, 'The Work of the Federation of South African Women, 25 May 1955.
[73] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea2, 'Demands put Forward by the Congress', 1955.
[74] Amy Thornton interview with Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, 9 August 2016.
[75] Ibid.

Scholars such as Walker claimed Joseph was the protagonist and spokesperson for the Federation. Walker claimed Joseph was the only woman to take the platform at the Congress of the People,[76] and that she proposed a clause on housing, security, and the Freedom Charter, all of which were seen as women's concerns. However, FEDSAW archives contradict this and reveal that multiple Federation members were key in launching the charter. FEDSAW members Joseph, Ngoyi and Moosa delivered speeches on the day.[77] The archival materials and secondary literature give a clearer sense of women's representation at the Congress of the People in Kliptown, demonstrating that Joseph did not have centre stage nor was she FEDSAW's main attraction as the historiography suggests. The latter implies Joseph was favoured because of her race, when in reality white people were looked down upon for fighting against apartheid.[78] However, archival evidence emphasised the importance FEDSAW placed on being inclusive, and representation of all Federation leaders. The event was well attended with 2884 delegates attending from 14 organisations,[79] and a quarter of those who attended were women.[80] The impact of the Freedom Charter was far reaching across multiple opposition organisations that, in their own right, had international connections.

This relationship between the FEDSAW and COPE was beneficial to both organisations. The Congress of the People Action Council asked the FEDSAW to help organise the COPE, which was agreed by the FEDSAW National Executive Committee in 1954.[81] By doing so, the COPE helped FEDSAW mobilise its women, whilst the Federation could help the COPE recruit members and create a new focus.[82] The Federation brought South African women's perspectives to the event. According to the correspondence between FEDSAW and the Congress Alliance, the Federation was formed to 'bring together all women for organised action'[83] and they aimed to fight for the defence of women and children in the hope of creating a

[76] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p.183.
[77] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea1.1, Congress of the People, letter from Helen Joseph to FEDSAW members, 25 May 1955.
[78] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[79] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea7, 'Supreme Court of South Africa (Special Criminal Court) Pretoria: Regina versus Adams and others: transcript of shorthand notes taken at the Congress of the People', 25–26 June 1955, p. 14.
[80] Ibid.
[81] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ad1.1 FEDSAW Circular Letter no. 3, 25 August 1954, p. 1.
[82] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 181
[83] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea1, 'The Work of the Federation of South African Women, 25 May 1955.

democratic South Africa and equality between men and women.[84] Within this correspondence, FEDSAW reiterated they were an organisation that was focused on all South African citizens, men and women.

Walker argues there were tensions between the messages behind the Freedom Charter and Women's Charter. The congress supporters were linked to a patriarchal society, which was in conflict with the new women's movement.[85] The Women's Charter was labelled as the first document of the women's movement in the 1950s[86], which confronted traditional societies, and how women were perceived in the environment. FEDSAW pamphlets defied this perspective and demonstrate that the congress supported the FEDSAW and their role in mobilising women, and invited them to help organise the Congress of the People and create the Freedom Charter.[87] The Federation's contribution to South African politics and potential impact against apartheid as a women's organisation did not go unnoticed. Therefore, there was not tension between these two charters as the organisations behind the charters worked together to achieve an equal society and fight against apartheid.

In addition to this, Walker claims there was conflict between the Federation and dominant ANC, which again was contended by archival sources. Joseph disagreed with Walker's depiction of FEDSAW's relationship with other political parties such as the ANC. According to Walker there was conflict between the ANC and FEDSAW[88], however Joseph clarified this in her comments to Walker about her unpublished book by stating those 'tensions' simply did not exist [89] as the opposition parties were united in their fight against the apartheid government. Joseph found this claim 'really most irritating' and it did not accurately capture the partnership between FEDSAW and other political parties.[90] Walker's book did not paint a 'true picture of the magnificent relationship there was, not only between women but also between men and women'.[91] This signifies there was a sense of unity between the opposition parties against the government during the 1950s that historiography perhaps could not capture in previous analysis.

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[84] Ibid.
[85] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p.157.
[86] Ibid.
[87] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ab2, 'The Work of the Federation of South African Women', April 1957, p. 2.
[88] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 190.
[89] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A1985, A4.3.8, Helen Joseph files, p. 5.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

The Freedom Charter was an important document that further solidified FEDSAW's relationship with organisations that opposed the government, and achieved an aim of political collaboration. The charter was seen as providing possible answers to the racial oppression and political challenges in South Africa. The Federation described it as 'The Freedom Charter is our light',[92] symbolising an ideal society that gave hope to all those who were oppressed and was the overall aim of the opposition parties. The FEDSAW were dedicated to implementing the Freedom Charter in their struggles against apartheid as well as the wider international context and was described as the 'real volkswil of the people of South Africa'.[93] By adopting and taking part in the charter, FEDSAW was cementing its role in the national liberation movement, demonstrating that women were active participants against apartheid.

FEDSAW's participation in the national liberation movement realigned their priorities, enabling them to engage with like-minded organisations within the international community. The Freedom Charter had a wider scope and impact compared to the Women's Charter, and was supported by countries such as Sudan, the USA, China, Czechoslovakia, the UK, Denmark, Holland, Russia, Kenya, Algeria and India.[94] This illustrates just how extensive the opposition parties' connections were.

Due to these far-reaching connections, the Charter was seen by activists as an influential document in South Africa. The charter had more of an impact compared to the Women's Charter, [95] which was two-fold in that it was internationally and nationally recognised, and was therefore seen as a threat by the government.[96] The charters situated South Africa's role in an international community. 'South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation, not war.'[97] The opposition organisations realised their transnational links were important in fighting against apartheid. They were aware that South Africa belonged to an international community and would contribute to world peace by fighting against apartheid. As much as apartheid isolated the country from the rest of

[92] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae2.5.3, 'World Congress of Mothers', p. 1.
[93] Ibid.
[94] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea2.1. 'Messages to the Congress of the People', 25 and 26 June 1955. pp. 4–14.
[95] Amy Thornton interview with Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, August 2016.
[96] Ibid.
[97] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea6, Freedom Charter, p. 2.

the world, universal links such as world peace and human rights united South Africa with the international community.

Joseph advocated the importance of the Federation being aligned with the Freedom Charter. She also reassured the Federation that 'in our struggles we are not alone'[98] and the 'struggle for freedom in South Africa is part of the struggle for peace and freedom in the world.'[99] This increased morale and motivated the Federation to continue the struggle for justice and freedom. By stating this, she highlighted the international support for anti-apartheid activism as well as the support from within the country from men and women of all races, and noted that the reason for connecting to the rest of the world was to strive for and maintain peace.

The Freedom Charter's intentions in unifying organisations against apartheid involved fighting against discrimination and linking South Africa to the rest of the world to fight in solidarity. The national liberation organisations believed the Freedom Charter was inevitable and the document was seen as illegal according to apartheid legislation. Apartheid was unconstitutional and legally violated human rights for as many as four-fifths of a population who had 'no alternative but to adopt unconstitutional means'.[100] Coercively forcing people to be discriminated against based on their race was the worst possible way of leading a country and 'supporting' its citizens.

FEDSAW's ideology in practice: Protests and Propaganda

Political collaborations with other organisations were therefore fundamental to FEDSAW. The nature of the Federation was as an independent organisation[101] that was self-governing, which rejected superior authority and was not subject to the governance of other political agencies. There was no formal alliance with other independent parties or movements,[102] however they were open to political collaborations and working with organisations in South Africa and abroad.

[98] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,952.
[99] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive. Reference: AD1812, Treason Trial Speech extracts, Gc.D, Helen Joseph, 1955.
[100] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,921.
[101] Hassim, *Women's Organisations and Democracy in South Africa*, p.14.
[102] Unterhalter, 'Women in Struggle', p. 889.

The FEDSAW's first protest on the 27th of October 1955 was based in the organisation's regional stronghold Transvaal,[103] and was against the Bantu Education Act (1953), which stated there would be a separation between white and black children's education, and the content of the information taught would be inferior to that of white institutions; the Group Areas Act (1950), which dictated where people from different races could live; and the Population Registration Act (1950) which classified and at times, reclassified people into different racial groups.[104] Last minute passes were announced to be obligatory for black women from January 1956 onwards, which influenced the Federation to include them in this protest. The Federation understood the impact these laws would have on fellow South Africans. The FEDSAW spoke about these laws not from a gendered perspective, but rather from a human rights perspective.[105] This considered what would happen to their male counter parts, what was happening to men and women at the time, and what was to happen to future generations in South Africa. The laws, FEDSAW believed, shamed South Africa both locally and internationally,[106] and were therefore not only violating South Africans' civil rights, but also what were internationally considered human rights.

The motivation for all the Federation's protests was to achieve the goals in the Freedom Charter and have a democratic country for all South Africans. Despite the intention to protest against these laws, passes soon became the main motivator for FEDSAW's demonstrations. The government announced in September 1955 that passes would be implemented and extended to black women in January 1956.[107] For their first protest in October 1955, the FEDSAW took inspiration from the Black Sash, and decided to protest at the Prime Minister's offices and official seat in Pretoria, the Union Buildings. Margaret Garzer from Springs suggested this at a FEDSAW meeting, and also thought the Sash should be invited, despite them not inviting the FEDSAW to their protests.[108] White women from the Black Sash and the Labour Party were invited and attended, while the majority of the Federation's women were from the Transvaal and Johannesburg.[109] The latter was a FEDSAW stronghold.

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[103] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p.193.
[104] Davenport, and Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, p. 378.
[105] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea2, 'Demands put Forward by the Congress', 1955, p. 4.
[106] Ibid.
[107] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, FEDSAW reports, date unknown, Cb1.4.1, p. 2.
[108] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A1985, A2, Helen Joseph speech 1978, p. 2.
[109] Ibid., p. 3.

The protest's structure was similar to what would be repeated in their largest, historical women's protest a year later on 9 August 1956. Signed petition forms were collected by FEDSAW leaders by the time protesters got to the Union Buildings,[110] and handed in at the minister's offices. The Federation came face to face with seats of power in the country, demonstrating they were not afraid to confront the government and politically oppose their laws. This was also one of the first protests to take place at the Union Buildings, which was in general perceived as a sacrosanct space in the country.

After petitions were delivered to the Prime Minister's office, the leaders met the congregation at the amphitheatre where they were waiting. Once together, the crowd remained silent for a period of time, as if in mourning, and then started singing one of the liberation movement anthems such as 'Nkosi Sikele iAfrika',[111] translated as 'God bless Africa', or 'Morena Boloka' and 'Touched a Woman struck a Rock'.[112] This protest was very much a celebration of women's rights, and literally making their voices heard, as their songs echoed over Pretoria. Through these protests, the Federation was continuing the Defiance Campaign's aims of increasing awareness of apartheid but was also setting trends of uniting all women and political parties against apartheid.

There are conflicting reports as to just how much of an impact the demonstrations had. The 1955 protest was well attended with an estimated 2000 women taking part,[113] however archival materials confirm it was higher with approximately 5000 women taking part in the protest.[114] This demonstrated that, for its time, it had a high impact in terms of numbers of participants as well exposure through other organisations.

FEDSAW's first demonstration that inspired women all over the country, in both rural and urban areas, fought against passes circulated by the government in March 1956[115] that were first issued in Winburg in the Orange Free State. Winburg had a history of passes when they were threatened with the reference books in

[110] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, FEDSAW reports, date unknown, Cb1.4.1, p. 2.
[111] Joseph, *Side by Side*, p. 73.
[112] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 89.
[113] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 88.
[114] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, FEDSAW memorandum on passes, date unknown, Cb1.5.6, p. 8.
[115] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, FEDSAW reports, date unknown, Cb1.4.1, p. 3.

1916.[116] By 1956, the same issue re-emerged, and women were intimidated to adopt the passes through scare tactics by the government. Protesters were threatened with being arrested under the Criminal Laws Amendment Act (1953) and fined up to £100.[117] 'On appeal to the Supreme Court, the bail was reduced to £5'.[118] Additionally, women in smaller, rural towns such as Putfontein in the Transvaal, were threatened that their pensions would be taken away from them.[119] These strategies forced women to give in to the government's demands while also fuelling women's political motivation to oppose the government, and further become involved in the wider national liberation movement.

These actions further unified urban and rural women in working closer together and educating each other about their rights regarding the passes. 'We realise many of the African women in the countryside have been tricked into taking these passes, but we are women of the towns and we know the pass to be an evil and shameful thing, an insult to womanhood.'[120] With this realisation, protests and defiance started to slowly emerge in rural areas, further spreading the Federation's influence and strengthening the fight against passes as a nation wide campaign.

Women in rural areas were more vulnerable than those in urban areas. By July 1957, 11% of women in the Union of South Africa had passes[121] and on further analysis women in rural areas had the passes while larger towns and cities were relatively untouched.[122] Women in towns and cities were more educated about the passes while those in rural areas were more vulnerable and were not politicised nor educated on their right to not have to formally accept passes as it was not yet legal. With the slow rate of passes being issued and accepted by black women, the FEDSAW report estimated the government would take almost a decade to ensure all black women had passes.[123] The government moved at a slow pace, which contributed to them temporarily halting the issuing of passes. This was beneficial for the Federation as it gave them time to further politicise women in the rural areas to join their cause and challenge apartheid.

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[116] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, FEDSAW reports, date unknown, Cb1.4.1, p. 2.
[117] Ibid., p. 4.
[118] Ibid., p. 3.
[119] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Cb1.4.7, FEDSAW memorandum from African women to Mayor of Springs, date unknown, p. 1.
[120] Ibid.
[121] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, FEDSAW reports, date unknown, Cb 1.4.1, p. 4.
[122] Ibid.
[123] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, FEDSAW reports, date unknown, Cb 1.4.1, p. 5.

FEDSAW grew in numbers and strength relatively quickly, so that by August 1956 it made history by organising and leading the largest protest against passes in South African history. The statistics of the FEDSAW's protests demonstrated that from January until July 1956, approximately 50,000 women protested, 38 demonstrations against passes organised by the FEDSAW took place, and the organisation was active in 30 different cities– with the Reef having the most supporters (Brakpan, a small town East of Johannesburg had 2000 women alone).[124] While the FEDSAW was present in both rural and urban areas, the rural areas were dominated more by the ANCWL,[125] which signifies the important relationship and role the ANCWL had in fuelling the success of the FEDSAW's activities.

In order to make their August 1956 protest possible, all opposition parties needed to work together. While it was labelled as a women's protest, it represented all South Africans fighting against discrimination as the Federation was collaborating with all opposition parties. Additionally, men helped spread the word about the protest. Joseph, Bernstein, Robert Resha and Norman Levy from the ANC travelled through all the provinces, specifically Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, for two weeks to raise the profile of the protest.[126] Men also bought train tickets for women to travel to the protest, as some stations were ordered not to sell women tickets in an attempt to reduce attendance at the demonstration.[127] This was a protest against all discrimination and was done with realising the Freedom Charter as its ultimate goal.

The plan was that women would march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria. The proceedings of the day included women getting to the Union Building by buses organised by FEDSAW, they would then be led to the amphitheatre by four leaders. Women abided by the apartheid laws where it was illegal to have a demonstration, so they were grouped in threes so it was not an official 'procession'.[128] The leaders, who were the same as those who led the October protest: Helen Joseph (COD), Sophia Williams (SACPO), Lilian Ngoyi (ANCWL) and Rahima Moosa (SAIC), collected the protesters' petitions and dropped them off at the prime minister's office. No one received the women,[129] demonstrating just how much they and the protest they had organised, were underestimated.

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[124] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 193.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Joseph, *Side by Side*, p. 80.
[127] Ibid., p. 82.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 194.

Politicians attempted to negotiate passes with women from different races. Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, the Minister of Native Affairs who would later become the Prime Minister of South Africa from 1961 until 1966, wanted to meet with the African women in the organisation in response to their proposed October 1955 protest,[130] whereas Prime Minister Strijdom only wanted to meet the white women following the August 1956 protest.[131] After this was rejected, the government put in place measures that would try to halt and prevent the meeting from taking place at all. For example, public meetings with three or more people were banned, public transport to get women to the march was unavailable in certain areas, and Security Branch police made their presence known.[132] This also reiterated the Federation's stance where they were united rather than several separate organisations, and believed women were of one race, the human race.[133] This strength in unity threatened the government and demonstrated the Federation's stronghold.

The imminent threat of passes for black women was becoming a stark reality when a notice was released by Dr Verwoerd in November 1956, stating all black females from 16 years onwards, were summoned to collect their reference books from magistrate's offices.[134] Passes would be issued from 23 November 1956 until the end of April 1957.[135] These dates were set initially in larger towns and cities across the four provinces. Passes eventually became compulsory by 1963, and even though they were still implemented, actions by organisations such as FEDSAW delayed them becoming compulsory sooner. The government tried to undermine any protests against passes, and threatened any organisation that opposed the passes or tried to stop them being issued to women.[136] Despite these threats, the FEDSAW continued to protest against passes during this period and to distribute leaflets against the pass system.[137] The FEDSAW's continuous protests against reference books meant that they were the constant voice against the pass system, bringing this to the forefront of opposition campaigns.

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[130] Joseph, *Side by Side*, p. 66
[131] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes,* p. 227.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Joseph, *Side by Side*, p. 66.
[134] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Cb 1.2, 'Notification of Issue of Issuing Books to Native Females' by Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs, 23 November 1956.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 192.
[137] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Cb1.4.7, FEDSAW reports, date unknown, p. 6.

The protest was seen as a success by the FEDSAW and the Congress Alliance. This demonstration raised the profile of the anti-pass campaign and was a 'monumental achievement'[138] for making history as the largest anti-apartheid protest at the time, which was also organised solely by women. This helped challenge women's stereotypes and their 'lack of political initiative was challenged'.[139] While the protest did not make international news, the FEDSAW contacted the South African Press Association to publish a letter Joseph wrote to Ruth Khama, the first lady of Botswana, informing her about the FEDSAW.[140] While this letter is not in the archives, one can only speculate that Joseph was trying to spread the news about the Federation's anti-pass campaign, knowing that the South African government heavily censored information about South Africa to an international audience and perhaps hoping that through Botswana the FEDSAW's aims and achievements would reach international news. Additionally, FEDSAW claimed the government had stated locally and abroad that passes were not being used[141] but South African women could see that this was not true as men still needed to abide by the laws.

The result of this protest put the FEDSAW in a risky position in relation to the South African government. By the 5th of December 1956, 156 activists in the Congress Alliance had been arrested on treason charges, including Joseph and Ngoyi. The Treason Trial started in 1956 and lasted until 1961. Prominent opposition leaders and comrades were arrested on charges of treason over an alleged conspiracy to overthrow the government.[142] This had direct implications for the Federation, which will be discussed later in this thesis.

The Federation had a specific protest style that was adopted early on in its history. The Federation believed in passive protests and while there was the occasional burning of passes as a symbol of defiance,[143] they were not a militant group. FEDSAW believed that fighting for freedom needed to be a peaceful process.[144] They did not believe in using violence to get attention and achieve peace, and advocated for national and international peace, which was reflected in

[138] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 195.
[139] Ibid.
[140] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ah 1.1. Correspondence to the South African Press Association and New Age, 29 October 1956.
[141] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference BAP 323.34, FEDSAW booklet, 'Strijdom, you have struck a rock', date unknown, p. 16.
[142] Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom, p. 232.
[143] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, FEDSAW reports, October 1957, Cb1.4.4, p. 2.
[144] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137 Ae2.5.2, Official reports, 9 August 1955.

both their protesting styles and their organisational aims. In addition to this passive approach, the Federation had a visible, assertive and flamboyant style to their protesting, which included singing and dancing, as well as dressing up for the occasion. The organisation was united by song and at their protests sang liberation songs that bound them to the wider liberation movement. These liberation movement anthems included 'Nkosi Sikele iAfrika'[145] translated as 'God bless Africa' or 'Morena Boloka', and 'Touched a Woman struck a Rock'.[146] Their protests were very much a celebration of women's rights and literally making their voices heard as their songs echoed over Pretoria. The protesters also took the opportunity to dress up for demonstrations. Women dressed for the occasion and only 'a camera could record the richness of the scene'[147] where the ANCWL wore the party's green and black colours, Indian members wore their traditional saris and Xhosa women chose to dress in their traditional robes and head pieces.[148] This signifies the respect these women had for the protest, where they were wearing their best outfits in order to protest against apartheid while also representing the diversity of South Africans. Wearing their traditional clothing was as much a unifying action as protest using performativity.

The end of this conference, like all FEDSAW meetings and protests, was festive. Women from townships in particular brought their energy to the meetings, changing them from protests to social gatherings.[149] This is important to note as this would set the tone for how the organisation would continue to protest in the future. This was an important part of their performance and how they communicated their discontent with the apartheid legislation, as well as their hope of overcoming injustices.

However, this approach was not well received by all FEDSAW members. Alexander, in particular, was unimpressed with the ebullient songs and stated in correspondence that she was looking forward to having a 'serious discussion and no songs!'[150] at FEDSAW meetings. Alexander did not have the patience or see the need for celebrations when there was still much to achieve in the struggle. Despite

[145] Joseph, Side by Side, p. 73.
[146] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 89.
[147] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference BAP 323.34, FEDSAW booklet, 'Strijdom, you have struck a rock', date unknown, p. 10.
[148] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 89.
[149] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p.154.
[150] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.8.2, Correspondence between Hilda Bernstein and Ray Alexander, 17 May 1954.

this, the FEDSAW included song and dance as part of their protests until they were no longer politically active in the early 1960s.

Black Sash: the emergence of white women fighting apartheid and their ideological development

A year after FEDSAW was created, the Black Sash emerged, adding a new and different viewpoint to anti-apartheid activism organised by women. The Black Sash, initially known as the Women's Defence of the Constitution League, was created in 1955, at a tea party in Johannesburg. Unlike the Federation, the Black Sash was an exclusively white women's organisation that was initially focused on campaigning against the Senate Bill. However once this bill was passed, the organisation redirected its focus and broadened its aims to fight for human rights and focus on various other discriminatory acts by the government such as the pass laws and housing issues.

In contrast to the FEDSAW, the Black Sash has an exhaustive volume of archival records, which map the organisation's evolution and growth since 1955. The annually amended Sash constitutions recorded how the organisation responded to South Africa's ever-changing political context. It is through these records that one can analyse how the Sash developed and responded to challenges through anti-apartheid activism. For example, the Black Sash's aims and constitution were reviewed and updated annually. Their 1956 constitution highlighted principles such as supporting 'parliamentary democracy' and safe guarding the moral principles of the Union,[151] reiterating the role of morality and justice. It also stated the Sash was 'non-party political and nondenominational'[152] and was focused on mobilising white supporters and only included white women.[153] By 1958, the Sash's constitution was more focused on education and propaganda.[154] This was specifically linked to the bail fund and advice offices that were created in 1958 to provide legal advice to the black population about issues such as the pass laws.[155] It was also the first instance when the Sash created something that enabled the organisation to directly work with

[151] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, A. Black Sash Constitution 1956, p. 1.
[152] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, A. Women's Defence of the Constitution League, p. 1
[153] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice,* p. 24.
[154] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, Black Sash the new Phase of the Black Sash 1958, p. 2.
[155] Noel Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*. (Claremont: Cape Town, 2006), p. 40.

the black population, despite not having black members, and ultimately demonstrates its ever-changing focus.

There was a noticeable shift in the Black Sash's ideological stance between its creation in 1955 and later in 1958. In its infancy, the Sash labelled itself as a pressure group[156] used 'for the restoration and encouragement of political morality'[157] that monitored the government's legislation, policies and implementation.[158] This organisation focused specifically on the Senate Bill and was apolitical in nature stating they would not collaborate with political parties. Their primary aim was to 'propagate respect for the constitution'[159] through opposing the removal of coloured voters from the Common Voters' Roll. This clarified the Sash's ideological stance in 1955 as an organisation that was rather isolating, and focused on one proposed piece of apartheid legislation.

Throughout the Sash's narrative in the 1950s, there was conflict between its actions and its ideology. The organisation clearly stated when it was first created that it was apolitical, which meant it was not party political as an organisation, however they were driven by political motivations. This motive is evident in their first protest on 25 May 1955 in Johannesburg. The Black Sash was involved in a multiracial, multiparty protest organised by the United Party (UP) against the Senate Bill. It was a well-attended march with an estimated 18,000 people[160] and represented a wide array of political parties such as the SACPO, COD, Liberal Party of South Africa and the South African Labour Party. This protest was seen as inclusive in the national liberation movement, as it was stated that the Senate Bill campaign was a small part of the fight against apartheid.[161] This demonstration was also used a way of promoting the COPE and the Freedom Charter and uniting all organisations that were opposed to apartheid. This signifies that the Black Sash, much to their objection, were aligned with wider anti-apartheid sentiment during this period.

There was a strategic reason why this became policy. The Sash's first president, Ruth Foley, believed being apolitical allowed the organisation to question

[156] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference BC 330, Katherine Murray folder, special conference 10-12 June 1958, p. 5.
[157] Black Sash, 'Introducing our Group', *Black Sash Journal* 1 (1) (January 1956), p. 1.
[158] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, B1.1, History and Policy Statements– A Short History of the Black Sash, 1963, p. 5.
[159] Davenport, and Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, p. 396.
[160] *The Black Sash: The Earlier Days*, directed by Cassandra Parker, Nodi Murphy and Denise Ackermann (South Africa: Doxa Productions, 1992), DVD.
[161] New Age, 'Fight the Senate Bill', *New Age*, 1 (32) (2 June 1955), p. 3.

'principles to its logical conclusion'[162] without being politically swayed. The Sash also wanted to remain completely independent from other political parties and not be taken advantage of.[163] There was conflict between political organisations about membership numbers and which organisation people belonged to. This was something the FEDSAW made clear in their communication with other political parties, reiterating they were a Federation that united all women from different political parties, rather than removing individuals from their dedicated parties and competing for membership. The latter removed any threat the FEDSAW could have posed. By contrast, the Black Sash were not clear about this stance when they were first created. The UP, an all-white political party, realised they could potentially use the Sash to increase the female members in their own organisation, which made the Sash very sensitive to who and how it was associated with other political organisations.[164]

However, this led to uncertainty around their role in anti-apartheid activism by the public and even within the organisation. Ideologically, the Black Sash confused the public, political parties and organisations. They described themselves as 'liberals'[165] with the biggest threats being conservatives (such as the NP). By contrast, opposition organisations that were labelled by the government as radical, included organisations such as the FEDSAW. The Federation saw the Sash's perspective as 'too timid to work towards radical social change.'[166] The organisation worked within the legal parameters[167], despite apartheid legislation being morally wrong. Therefore, this perspective prevented them from being arrested and breaking the law.

Despite this, their ideological uncertainty was recognised by the Sash members themselves. Nell Green, a prominent Sash leader in the 1950s, stated that Black Sash members needed to 'clear our own minds, educate ourselves, and then try to get the white voters to see the issues clearly'.[168] It was unclear to the organisation what specifically they should focus on, and how they should contribute

[162] Ruth Foley, 'The Real Tragedy of South Africa', *Black Sash Journal* 3 (15) (February 1959), p. 13.
[163] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 152.
[166] Ibid., p. 153.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Sunday Times, 'the Black Sash makes up its mind on Poverty and Politics'– Stanley Uys, 1960, –University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference:, BC330, Kathleen Murray

to fighting against apartheid, considering they were created with the sole purpose of fighting against the Senate Bill.

The public also questioned the organisation's aims and its purpose. *The Star* newspaper asked a Sash member during a protest what exactly their purpose was and what they wanted to accomplish as an organisation. After a long pause, the Sash member in question answered they wanted to 'make people aware of what the Act of the Union meant to South Africa'[169] and that this Act united South Africans.[170] This implies that by understanding the Act, South African society would have a better understanding of democracy and unity. The irony and controversy behind these statements exposed the lack of unity and cooperation the Sash had with the rest of the liberation movement. While the Union Act united the two Boer republics with the two former British colonies, thereby creating the Republic of South Africa, it did not unify the South African population, as segregation was still rife between Europeans and non-Europeans. In this sense, the Sash's message of unity was backward and out–dated. It was not progressive compared to the rest of the organisations in the liberation movement.

Moreover, other political activists in the wider anti-apartheid movement also questioned the Sash's role. Joseph, who had colleagues and personal contacts in the Sash and took part in some of their demonstrations, stated that she too found it difficult to place them politically,[171] and that she believed they were divided amongst themselves between those who wanted to be integrated into the wider national movement and others who wanted to disband as the Senate Bill became legalised. Moreover, opposition parties and organisations who had not worked with the Sash could not relate to them. *New Age* reported that the Black Sash's main aim was a secret,[172] further supporting the ambiguity of what their role in the political context was, where they fitted and what they hoped to achieve overall.

In its first year, the Sash functioned in complete isolation from other political organisations. The Sash rejected collaborative invitations from the FEDSAW, COD, Civil Rights League and the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR).[173]

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[169] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, J1.1.1, The Star, 12 November 1955, p. 1.
[170] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, J1.1.1, Ruth Foley speech at 13 November 1955 protest.
[171] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC1368, B1.3– women's vision foundation: Helen Joseph.
[172] New Age, 'Strijdom versus the Liberal Opposition', *New Age* 2 (5) (24 November 1955), p. 8.
[173] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 42.

They were also not part of important anti-apartheid events such as the creation and delivery of the Freedom Charter in June 1955.[174] This demonstrates that the Sash was not rejecting collaboration with organisations due to its demographics, for example the COD and the Civil Rights League were also white organisations, but rather they were not interested in aligning themselves with any political ideology, and in this sense remained true to the aims of the Sash where it stated it was apolitical, meaning non-party political. Their isolation caused additional speculation about their contribution to the wider national liberation movement. Additionally, the relationship between the UP and the Sash contradicted the Sash's policy of not formally supporting political parties unless it suited the overall organisation. By 1958, tension emerged between the UP and the Black Sash due to the Sash's more collaborative approach, which was interpreted as the Sash breaking the law to help black people.[175] The concerned UP organised a meeting for women led by MP Catherine Taylor[176] in an attempt to sway them from further organising and taking part in illegal protests. This was done in vain as the relationship between the Sash and the UP fundamentally faded with the Sash further collaborating with other organisations to actively fight against apartheid.

Some prominent members of South African society were opinionated about the Sash's future and believed they should disband because their influence was limited to a very small minority. This included Sir De Villiers Graaff, UP leader from 1956 until 1977, who stated in 1958 on behalf of the UP that people no longer needed to support the Sash because the UP had lost the general election and as such the Sash were no longer important. Additionally, Donald Molteno, a former MP in the Cape and later a legal adviser for the Sash, was not convinced the women were dedicated to the struggle and wider liberation movement[177] as they were not actively working with other organisations against apartheid. By 1959, the Sash had become more involved in anti-apartheid activism, and had a strained relationship with the UP. The then UP Cape leader, Dr Jan Steytler, demanded the Sash disperse[178] due to their low impact and low membership numbers. By this stage, the

[174] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[175] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p, 39.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 47.
[178] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC1368, B1.1, Black Sash– Early history, p. 2.

Sash also was not contributing to increasing women members in the UP and had served its purpose in the UP-Sash relationship.

The constant questioning about the organisation's purpose was an underlying issue in the Sash and led to a fracture in the organisation. In 1958, Foley resigned from the position as president because she felt the organisation had moved from its original aims[179] of focusing solely on the Senate Act. The Sash was created specifically to address and stop the Senate Bill from being passed, but once it was legalised, this led to internal tensions which created a split in membership. The more conservative members believed the Sash should solely be created to fight against the Senate Bill, and thereafter disband. By contrast, the liberal Black Sash members believed the Sash had to continue fighting against apartheid and therefore should not disband but rather continue as an organisation and join (even on an informal basis) the wider national liberation movement.

This was supported by Black Sash members who had a political past and were interested in working with other organisations to fight against apartheid. The Sash's constitution prevented individuals from formally aligning themselves to other organisations.[180] In 1954, a year before the Black Sash was formally created, Miriam Heppner, Muriel Fisher, Nancy Dick and Jean Bernadt[181] all signed the initial letter of support for the creation of the FEDSAW in March 1954, illustrating their eagerness to collaborate with other organisations.

The Sash continued with a renewed focus on wider human rights, which meant they would become more actively involved in fighting against apartheid and were closer to the national liberation movement than before. Foley's resignation had a direct effect on membership, which declined after 1959 to below 2000 members.[182] Thereafter, the organisation never surpassed 2000 members.[183] This displayed Foley's dedicated supporters, as well as the unwillingness of some members to become more politically integrated in the anti-apartheid movement.

Between Foley's resignation and political scrutiny about the Sash's position, Eulalie Stott and Jean Sinclair stepped up into leadership positions within the organisation, and were both keen to get the Sash working with other organisations to fight apartheid. Sinclair stated 'the Black Sash, as in the past, are always willing to

[179] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice*, p. 34.
[180] Ibid., p. 29.
[181] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[182] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, J1.1.1.
[183] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice*, p. 34.

co-operate on matters of common interest on a basis of complete equality'.[184] Unfortunately, this was not true in the beginning of the organisation's existence in 1955, but by the end of the 1950s, the Sash started colloborating more with organisations such as the Civil Rights League,[185] FEDSAW and Pan Africanist Congress.

Through cooperating with other organisations, the Sash learnt about legislation they would not have been exposed to. The context that led to this change included the newly amended Sash aims to fight against apartheid through opposing passes, and racial discrimination was formally denounced as morally wrong.[186] Sash members learnt about the injustices of the pass laws and how people were randomly interrogated, arrested and 'chucked into the paddy wagon and treated like nothing on earth.'[187] The Sash further understood how life was devalued through working with families who were affected by the pass laws, and consciously aligned the national pass campaign.

This sense of cooperation was reflected in the Sash's 1959 constitution. Their constitution responded to the political environment through highlighting one of its objectives as being focused on parliamentary democracy as in the 1956 constitution, but also 'civil rights and liberties',[188] signifying the organisation's newly focused approach towards human rights. It was only by 1962 that the Sash's constitution included the words 'human rights' indicating how the Sash had aligned themselves with the UDHR in 1960.[189] These changes are evident in their membership, approach to race, protests and their protest styles, which ultimately influenced how they were perceived abroad and how this contributed to their transnational connections.

Debates within the Black Sash

Membership based on race was a point of contention within the organisation. It was only open to white women, who were also the only women who could vote in

[184] Black Sash, 'Black Sash versus Radio South Africa', *Black Sash* Journal 5 (5) (December 1961), p. 10.
[185] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC 930, Thornton Collection, Black Sash newsletter, December 1958, p. 4.
[186] Joan MacRobert, 'Forty Years–a Celebration', Black Sash pamphlet, 37 (3) (May 1995), p. 3.
[187] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[188] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, Black Sash Constitution 1959, p. 1.
[189] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC1368, B1.1– Black Sash– Early history, p. 1.

South Africa in this period,[190] with the organisation's constitution stating it was for 'all European women citizens of the Union of S.A.'[191] The Black Sash felt that they could 'best work and make an appeal to the public as women',[192] and believed they would have more weight in the electorate as voters to influence and get the NP to change their proposed racial policies and legislation.[193]

The Sash also felt responsible for the white government's actions and legislation.[194] As white women who were the only women to acquire the vote in 1930, the Sash's membership criteria automatically excluded non-Europeans and applied the colour bar to the organisation. The Sash's 1956 constitution avoided using terms related to race and claimed it was an organisation that was open to all women who had the same beliefs and principles as the Black Sash.[195] Despite being racially exclusive, not all white women were welcome to join the Black Sash. White women who were not eligible to vote on the basis of their age or foreign nationality also did not qualify to be Sash members,[196] and had to be naturalised first. Additionally, the Sash were selective as to whom they would accept in the organisation based on applicants' political beliefs and ideology. A formal application process including references was introduced after 'Afrikaans spies' were discovered in the organisation,[197] feeding information back to the government. While not all members were spies, applications from people such as Sonia Bunting were rejected because the Sash were conscious of being linked to her political ideology, although they would have been keen to collaborate with her or another organisation.[198] Bunting was a member of the Communist Party and was married to a fellow Communist Party member, which at the time was seen as a radical, left wing party that openly opposed the NP and apartheid. There was a formality behind applying for a position in the Sash. The application process was created to ensure members had the 'right

[190] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice*, p. 28.
[191] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, Women's Defence of the Constitution League, p. 1.
[192] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, C3, National Conference 1956–59, p. 1.
[193] Ibid.
[194] *The Black Sash: The Earlier Days*, directed by Cassandra Parker, Nodi Murphy and Denise Ackermann (South Africa: Doxa Productions, 1992), DVD.
[195] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, Black Sash Constitution 1956, p. 3
[196] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, C3, National Conference 1956–59, p. 1.
[197] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[198] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives, Reference: BC930 "Black Sash applies its own ban" 1 March 1962.

ideas'[199] about the organisation, also ensuring they were part of the organisation for genuine motives and would adhere to its aims.

Along with the arguments that white women had the legal advantage to oppose the NP government, white privilege also played a role in how this would benefit the organisation. The Black Sash was made up of middle class white women, most of whom had the luxury of time and availability. Members themselves stated that white women were 'freer' than the men or non-European women.[200] Robb claimed that white women were 'freer to do the right thing'[201] where the Sash members, mostly housewives, were not at risk of losing employment.[202] Furthermore, Green stated in an interview 'We are privileged–not tied to the kitchen sink' and that this was 'all the more reason why women should play their full part'.[203] By having the privilege of domestic help, white women were available to be politically active.[204] As such, the members were upfront about their white privilege, which was acknowledged and used to their advantage. I have used the evidence from these interviews to demonstrate the Black Sash member's self-awareness of their class and white privilege. These interviews contribute to the organisation's primary sources, where Black Sash members openly acknowledged their privileged position was used as a motivator to fight for justice, and was therefore used to their advantage.

Class also played an important role in the Black Sash's membership. The organisation's members were wives of 'prominent citizens'[205] such as academics and lawyers, and as such, the Sash members were well educated and 'dedicated to liberal principles'[206]. Due to their social standing, they were often invited to high profile events where ministers and politicians would be present, such as the opening of the DF Malan airport in Cape Town,[207] where invited Sash members slipped their sashes into their handbags, put them on once they were in the event and protested in silence.[208] The Black Sash took advantage of their role in society where they had

[199] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[200] *The Black Sash: The Earlier Days*, directed by Cassandra Parker, Nodi Murphy and Denise Ackermann (South Africa: Doxa Productions, 1992), DVD.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid.
[203] *The Black Sash: The Earlier Days*, directed by Cassandra Parker, Nodi Murphy and Denise Ackermann (South Africa: Doxa Productions, 1992), DVD.
[204] Interview with Elizabeth Davenport, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[205] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p. 29.
[206] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice,* p. 23.
[207] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p. 29.
[208] *The Black Sash: The Earlier Days*, directed by Cassandra Parker, Nodi Murphy and Denise Ackermann (South Africa: Doxa Productions, 1992), DVD.

the advantage of white privilege, able to attend such events and use their class as a way of protesting against apartheid.

The Sash were also criticised for excluding men from their organisation. Sinclair jokingly stated the Sash was a women's organisation, because women were simply more efficient than men.[209] Whilst said flippantly, Sinclair was restating the multiple roles and jobs women had in society, and how they managed these roles successfully while fighting against bigger issues in society. Nonetheless, the Black Sash were keen to get men involved with their organisation and created a short-lived male counterpart of the Sash, called the Covenanters in July 1955 as a way of increasing male support for the Black Sash, focusing on churches, businesses and intellectuals.[210] This organisation disbanded as quickly as it started due to its vague aims of wanting to 'create a new deal for South Africa'.[211] Despite this, the Sash acknowledged men who supported and helped raise funds for the organisation and they were recognised as 'associate members'.[212] Rodney Davenport, a well-respected History professor, was one of the few men labelled as an associate member in the Sash. Associate membership entailed recognition of support of the Sash as well as being sent literature related to the organisation.[213] These associate members had no other role in the organisation besides donating money or raising funds.

The organisation's exclusivity caused controversy within the organisation and the wider national liberation movement. There was much debate within the organisation about what the members felt the Sash should do regarding opening its membership to all women. Some members felt the Sash would lose its power in the electorate if it was a multiracial group and would be in a vulnerable position where the government could ban them[214] under the Suppression of Communism Act (1950) or 'clamp down' on their activities.[215] Others believed the Sash were hypocritical in only allowing white women as members, therefore practising apartheid within their own organisation.[216] The Sash were well aware of how hypocritical they seemed but

[209] *The Black Sash: The Earlier Days*, directed by Cassandra Parker, Nodi Murphy and Denise Ackermann (South Africa: Doxa Productions, 1992), DVD.
[210] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 47.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[213] Interview with Elizabeth Davenport, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[214] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 41.
[215] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, Central Executive Committee, C1, Minutes from the Central Executive committee, 10 July 1957.
[216] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, C3, National Conference 1956–59, p. 1.

were also trying to use their legal rights as voters to protest against the government, as they believed they would be taken more seriously due to their legal status.

This debate emerged by mid-July 1957, where the Western Cape members in particular felt they needed to work with black people in order to better understand where the Sash could assist them. The organisation felt this was very difficult to do when they were exclusively white. [217] Sinclair, one of the Black Sash founders and later the Sash president from 1961 until 1975, became increasingly liberal in the organisation and believed that the Sash should have extended membership to include non-whites, whereas Foley and other prominent members in the organisation ignored Sinclair's argument and believed it was not beneficial for the Sash to be racially inclusive. In relation to racial divides, Sinclair herself stated that the Sash leaders were naïve in the earlier years of the organisation.[218] It was not until Foley formally left the Black Sash that the Sash collaborated further with multiracial organisations.

The Black Sash felt they could achieve more by being made up of white women with voting rights. The Sash's attitude to race was one of 'no protest at all' rather than the 'half-loaf protest',[219] a similar comment made by the WEAU in 1911, which was also racially exclusive to white women. While these women were described as 'law abiding liberals,'[220] the Sash were fearful of revolutions and violence by the liberals– this kind of violence would further separate the races, regardless of their political affiliation– whether they were liberal or not.[221] This attitude would dictate where they would have their protests and what they would look like. The Sash were also concerned about people from different races joining their protests and decided to have their first protest in Johannesburg as they had reservations organising the protest in Cape Town where coloured people would most likely join the march.[222] The Sash women felt like they had a 'double burden' where they were fearful of revolution, but also the white population were politically and spiritually damaging themselves through totalitarian actions of apartheid.[223] This put

[217] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, Central Executive Committee, C1, Minutes from the Central Executive committee, 10 July 1957.
[218] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 43.
[219] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 153.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Dr Ellen Hellman stated in Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 154.
[222] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p. 30.
[223] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 154.

them in a difficult position of fighting against the white government as whites, but also fighting for non-whites without having them represented in the organisation.

Scholars have also criticised the Sash for not accepting black members into the organisation until the 1960s. Academics such as Gwendolen Carter believed the Black Sash's biggest mistake was not forming a relationship with the FEDSAW.[224] Mary Burton, Black Sash president from 1986 until 1990, challenged this perspective by stating that if the Black Sash and the Federation had an official relationship, the Sash would have been banned,[225] like most opposition organisations in the 1960s, and would not have continued to fight against apartheid in South Africa in the 1960s and '70s, compared to the majority of opposition parties who were banned in the country. Due to this exclusivity, the Sash's protests and impact were very limited compared to the FEDSAW who had a larger membership, more alliances, well-attended protests and campaigns. This signifies the Sash's all-white organisational structure was self-limiting.

The Black Sash also received international criticism about its racially exclusive membership criteria. An English opinion piece published by the *Daily Dispatch* criticised the Sash's racial exclusivity. From a foreigner's perspective, opposition to the government was all-inclusive at their national conferences and a welcome debate about the future direction of the opposition, unlike the Sash who were exclusive and uninterested in collaboration.[226] The Sash was depicted as having double standards and being hypocritical, where on one hand they were fighting for racial equality, while at the same time keeping black women subordinate by employing them as domestic servants or maids. As such, they were criticised for having unclear policies and not accepting or exploring alternative solutions for vulnerable people in South Africa.[227] Their white privilege was held against them and they were seen as hypocrites for not wanting to work with non-white organisations, yet trusting non- white domestic helpers.

Despite their racial exclusivity, the Sash wanted to help black men and women where possible. The organisation created advice offices throughout the country, where they would help black people who were directly affected by apartheid

[224] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice*, p. 33.
[225] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice*, p. 33.
[226] Black Sash, 'Black Sash versus Radio South Africa', *Black Sash* Journal 5 (5) (December 1961), p. 9.
[227] Ibid., p. 10.

legislation such as the pass laws.[228] This creates quite a contradiction, where on one hand the Black Sash was an organisation that did not allow multiracial membership, while on the other hand they advised women and men from other races how to deal with issues that emerged due to apartheid. Not only was this approach contradictory, but it was also disparaging to black women who did not have the option of joining the organisation, yet were advised by white women. However, the advice offices could have also been used as a bridge to link and connect white and black women.[229] Black communities welcomed the Sash's help and used the advice offices, which had translators to assist with cases where needed. Despite using these offices, the black community could not support the Sash even if they wanted to, due to their racial exclusivity.

By the early 1960s, the Black Sash decided to abolish their racial limitations related to membership. In 1963, the Sash opened membership to all women regardless of race[230] but remained a largely white organisation. There were very few black members[231] and in some branches, the only black people who were part of the organisation, were paid staff members.[232] By opening the organisation to a wider audience, they were embracing their role in the wider anti-apartheid movement and unifying all South African women to fight against apartheid. With this in mind, by the 1960s, it was too late to become multiracial as the Sash already had a reputation for being an all- white, middle class organisation[233] and non-Europeans were not interested in joining as they were already affiliated with other political groups.[234] They did not see the point of joining the Sash as it could not offer them anything different compared to their own political parties.[235] Noel Robb, a prominent Black Sash member from 1955, believed this led to the organisation having a 'missed opportunity' of being multiracial[236] which was and still is a point of contention when discussing the Sash's role during apartheid.

[228] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 107.
[229] William Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa* (UK: Oxford University press, 2001), p. 189.
[230] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice,* p. 24.
[231] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[232] Interview with Elizabeth Davenport, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[233] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice*, p. 38.
[234] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives, BC1368, B1.3– women's vision foundation: Adele Keen: Rosebank branch.
[235] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[236] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC1368, B1.3– women's vision foundation. Interview with Noel Robb, July 1990, interviewed by Monica Ritchken, Cape Town, South Africa.

The Black Sash's protests and ideological stance

In relation to their protests, there were three ways the Black Sash participated in anti-apartheid activism: dropping off petitions at the Prime Minister's office; 'haunting' members of parliament, and holding vigils; and convoys. Their first style of protest included writing up petitions and dropping them off at the Prime Minister's office. Soon after the Sash began, two petitions were created after the May 1955 multiparty Senate Bill protest which were interpreted by the liberation movement as successful. The Black Sash's first protest on the 25th of May 1955 drew 500 signatures to the Mayor of Johannesburg and was a mass protest with an estimated 18,000 people in attendance.[237] This demonstrated the enormity of collaborative protests against apartheid.

The two petitions included a request to the Prime Minister to repeal legislation, and one to the Governor General to withhold his assent from the Senate Act.[238] Petitions were signed by women only, and within 10 days over 160,000 women had signed these petitions.[239] This protest consisted of a diverse group of women– housewives and factory workers.[240] The members of the Sash decided that petitions needed to be drawn up and presented to the Governor General and Prime Minister, proof that women were part of 'organised resistance' and that South Africans would 'demonstrate to the world' that they were not willing to tolerate immoral political decisions.[241] The term 'organised resistance' illustrates they were actively becoming part of anti-apartheid activism, even if at that given moment in time, it was not all that clear. The transnational element also emerges with this list as they were going to demonstrate to the world through their actions that they would not tolerate discrimination.

The second form of protest was in the form of 'hauntings' and vigils, where women would stand in silence outside the municipal offices, parliament and other venues where ministers might be present. The Black Sash's protesting style was 'dignified but forceful'.[242] The term 'haunting' was used to describe the Sash's silent and motionless protests; it was an eerie way of protesting against the government. Women were seen but not heard at these hauntings, making them a visual reminder

[237] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 6.
[238] Spink, *Black Sash: The Beginning of a Bridge in South Africa*, p. 30.
[239] Ibid., p. 32.
[240] Rogers, *The Black Sash: South African's Fight for Democracy*, p. 16.
[241] Rogers, *The Black Sash: South African's Fight for Democracy*, p. 20.
[242] Black Sash, 'The Betrayal and After', *Black Sash Journal* 1 (2) (February 1956), p. 1.

of the opposition to the government's laws. The Sash needed to be meticulous in their planning to ensure the hauntings could take place. The organisation created codes, so their plans were not discovered if overheard by governmental authorities. The Sash used codes to communicate the movement of ministers, and these were named after flowers such as roses and proteas for different ministers.[243] Pink carnation was the code name used for Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eric Louw,[244] and codes were typically used when ministers were on their way to an event or arriving at an airport.[245] Van Selm recalled how the ministers became increasingly uncomfortable with the women haunting them at the airports, so they would eventually avoid using the main entrance, and would leave airports via back entrances.[246]

In addition to hauntings, the organisation also protested in the form of vigils. The organisation's first protest was a two-day vigil held outside the Union Buildings on 28 June 1955 and included women from other organisations such as the FEDSAW and the Garment Workers' Union.[247] The protest gained attention and popularity. Sixty women slept at the Union Buildings on the first night, and this increased to 100 women on the second night.[248] Amongst these women were white FEDSAW members such as Helen Joseph and Violet Weinberg. After this demonstration, the Black Sash members were determined to be seen protesting against the Senate Bill. From 18 July 1955 until January 1956, as Parliament discussed the Senate Bill, the Sash women would hold vigils at the Union Buildings on every working day from 8am until 4pm[249] and would rotate participants hourly.[250] The motivation for this was to leave a message that would resonate on the Cabinet Minister's conscience.[251] Livingstone recalled that the Sash would leave button pins with their slogans wherever possible[252] such as in books in libraries, sugar pots in cafes and so forth, in a bid to increase Black Sash awareness and promote themselves.

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[243] Interview with Elizabeth Davenport, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[244] *The Black Sash: The Earlier Days*, directed by Cassandra Parker, Nodi Murphy and Denise Ackermann (South Africa: Doxa Productions, 1992), DVD.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid.
[247] Helen Joseph, *Tomorrow's Sun: A Smuggled Journal from South Africa.* (London: Hutchinson and co., 1966), p. 64.
[248] Black Sash, 'The Story of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League', *Black Sash Journal* 1 (1) (January 1956), p. 6.
[249] *The Black Sash: The Earlier Days*, directed by Cassandra Parker, Nodi Murphy and Denise Ackermann (South Africa: Doxa Productions, 1992), DVD.
[250] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p. 29.
[251] Black Sash, 'The Story of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League', *Black Sash* Journal 1 (1) (January 1956), p. 6.
[252] *The Black Sash: The Earlier Days*, directed by Cassandra Parker, Nodi Murphy and Denise Ackermann (South Africa: Doxa Productions, 1992), DVD.

This was the first protest where women camped at the Union Buildings, openly protesting against the government. Foley stated that 'the significance of the women's movement is its spontaneity'.[253] This illustrates two things, firstly that the South African women's movement formed rapidly, and secondly that women were flexible in their protesting styles, whether that was through vigils, protests, marches, campaigns and so forth. Foley in particular saw the Sash as being part of a women's movement in so much as a movement of women which wascreated to fight against discrimination, rather than a movement created on feminist ideals.

Their last form of protest included their convoys. The great convoy took place in February 1956 in Cape Town with approximately 150 cars.[254] This was used as a form of protest where women were driving from different provinces and towns, and once they got to Cape Town, they formed a parade in Adderley Street and carried signs from which branches they belonged to.[255] They paid homage to the 1820 British settlers in South Africa, by starting the protest at the monument dedicated to the settlers, and including descendants such as Moira Henderson as key individuals in the protest.[256] Some members remembered the convoy being greeted in Cape Town with 'streets lined with cheering crowds.'[257] This demonstrated the public's support, and the convoy was also used as a way to pay reverence to the past– again trying to bridge the separation between the Afrikaans and English-speaking populations. It was also a physical manifestation of inclusion in that the convey was a physical demonstration in all provinces.

The Black Sash's approach towards feminism

Like the FEDSAW, the Black Sash did not identify as feminists, nor was their cause focused on the feminist ideology. This was clearly stated in their meetings and conferences where they stated:

> The Black Sash was originally constituted as a women's organisation not because its founders were feminists, but because they believed

[253] Rogers, *The Black Sash: South African's Fight for Democracy*, p. vii.
[254] *The Black Sash: The Earlier Days*, directed by Cassandra Parker, Nodi Murphy and Denise Ackermann (South Africa: Doxa Productions, 1992), DVD.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p. 31.
[257] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC1368, B1.3- women's vision foundation: Madelaine Parfitt- Somerset West Black Sash member.

that, for a number of reasons, they could best work and make an appeal to the public as women.[258]

The organisation used their strength and roles as women in society to fight against apartheid. I have used personal experiences and opinions that emerged from the interviews conducted with Black Sash members to support archival material that stated the feminist ideology did not appeal to the Sash women. Diana Davis, Black Sash member in Port Elizabeth, claimed it did not cross their minds to associate with feminism, considering that white women already had the vote[259] and the Sash members were 'too busy with general politics'[260] such as the issue of passes. The Sash made it clear in the 1950s that they wanted to defend all South Africans' rights[261] and feminism during this period was too exclusive and did not fit with their overall aims. Equality and racial discrimination were bigger issues that affected many more people in South Africa and were therefore the primary concerns to address.

The Black Sash went on to align themselves with feminism in the 1980s. Burton recalled this was due to a new generation of Sash members who identified South African patriarchy as the main problem in apartheid South Africa.[262] This caused a debate within the organisation, with the older generation of women still believing feminism was a waste of time[263] when there were larger issues in society to address. As such, the ideology of feminism in the 1980s was put aside again, so the Sash could focus on human rights.

Feminism was not particularly relevant for South African women in the 1950s, given the wider political context. South African women were fighting for freedom for all South Africans and 'were part of the whole struggle for freedom.'[264] It was with this common aim of human rights that the FEDSAW and the Black Sash were united in their fight against apartheid, and this linked them to international organisations.

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[258] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC1166, ' Points against opening Black Sash membership to all women', 1963, p. 1.
[259] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[260] Interview with Elizabeth Davenport 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[261] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[264] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A1985, A2, speech by Helen Joseph, 6 December 1974, Gandhi Hall, p. 10.

FEDSAW and the Black Sash's commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

While the FEDSAW and Black Sash had little in common when they were first established in the mid-1950s, they were bound by a common international aim. The Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations on 10 December 1948, created international interest in promoting and protecting human rights throughout the world. There were overlaps between the declaration and the Freedom Charter where various articles had the same messages, such as equal rights between the sexes and the rights to freedom of movement, marriage, and peaceful assemblies and associations.[265] The declaration was created to protect these freedoms while also ensuring 'progressive measures, national and international to secure the universal and effective recognition', [266] which demonstrates the nature of the document. It was committed to uniting countries in achieving world peace making this a transnational motivation worldwide. This level of transnationalism appealed to anti-apartheid organisations, for it allowed an avenue for expression, help and justice. Transnational connections could potentially help gain support for anti-apartheid activism and pressure the government to change their minds on legalised racism.

The declaration and Freedom Charter highlighted concerns that were raised in the Women's Charter such as the international concept of men and women working together as equals. 'Equal rights between men and women' [267] would determine social progress. This links women's rights to wider human rights without isolating and only focusing on women.

One of the constant debates within the Sash was the possibility of supporting the UDHR. The Cape branch wanted the Sash to endorse the declaration, given the situation that was happening in South Africa. This was first brought up at a national conference in 1957, but the Sash agreed to postpone adopting it as they were focusing on their own direction and annual conference.[268] The issue would be circulated to the regions and discussed at the national conferences in March 1957

[265] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea6.4, Declaration of Human Rights, p. 1.
[266] Ibid., p. 2.
[267] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea6.4, Declaration of Human Rights, p. 1.
[268] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, C1. Central Executive Committee, 7 March 1957, p. 2443.

and November 1957. After several rejections, the annual conference in November 1960 accepted the proposal for the Sash to accept the declaration[269] and it was recognised that the 'Black Sash strive to promote respect for the principles laid down by the Declaration'.[270] The Sash officially adopted the UDHR in 1960.[271] This decision could have been affected by the role of leadership and national events such as Sharpeville, harsher apartheid laws, the declared state of emergency and banning of other organisations.

The Sash refused to sign up to the declaration earlier as they felt it was synonymous with the Freedom Charter, a document highlighting principles of a democratic country where all South Africans would be equal regardless of race, class or gender, which was created by opposition and multiracial political parties.[272] They felt the declaration went against their apolitical stance.

The Sash was seen as hypocritical by fellow comrades in the national liberation movement, once they aligned themselves with the declaration and not the Freedom Charter. The charter echoed the UDHR and the Sash were criticised that they should join the COD for the Freedom Charter and join the liberation movement.[273] According to *New Age* and the wider opposition organisations, if the Sash denied the Freedom Charter (and were therefore denying the declaration), then they believed in racial exclusion.[274] This demonstrates the Sash's isolation in anti-apartheid activism within the country and reflects the ideological confusion both nationally and transnationally.

The similarities between the two documents were compared at the height of apartheid. Joseph highlighted that both the Freedom Charter and the UDHR were documents that represented the public and fought for justice, equality and human rights for all people regardless of sex, race or class.[275] She also emphasised that the idea of protecting human rights was not new, but the UDHR was a newly international declaration.[276] This signified that the international community had

[269] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, C3, Annual National Conference, November 1960, Cape Town.
[270] Ibid.
[271] Ibid.
[272] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 69.
[273] New Age, 'What are the Black Sash up to?', *New Age* 2 (7) (8 December 1955), p. 2.
[274] Ibid.
[275] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A1985, A2, Declaration of Human Rights celebratory speech by Helen Joseph, 6 December 1974, Gandhi Hall, p. 4.
[276] Ibid.

contributed and agreed to this declaration making it a binding global document on what was acceptable for human rights.

Joseph also used this opportunity to highlight the main difference that separated the documents. The charter was context heavy (it focused on the apartheid legislation and racial divisions, and Joseph believed the Defiance Campaign led to the COD)[277] that was set by the South African people and most opposition parties supported this document, including the FEDSAW. By contrast, the UDHR was focused on the international context after World War Two and at the beginning of the Cold War. It was created by an international organisation and was formally supported by the Black Sash in South Africa. As a result there was a broader population involved focused on international events and wider world politics. Even so, South Africa was a unique country, which violated international expectations of what was democratically acceptable in dealing with human rights.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined how the FEDSAW and Black Sash's changing ideology influenced the way they functioned, through their aims, protests and membership, and the documents they created and supported such as the Women's Charter, Freedom Charter and Declaration of Human Rights.

FEDSAW's beginnings were intertwined with the Women's Charter's message of women's rights. However, on closer inspection, it was not solely about women or women's rights. Instead, this was an avenue where for the first time, women could formalise their political standing within the national liberation movement, alongside their male counterparts, and fight against all forms of oppression including specific subjugation women experienced. The Women's Charter did not highlight or label the Federation as a feminist organisation despite being created initially to do so, but rather was used as a document that summarised women's battles in the 1950s and their role in the wider liberation movement in a South African and international context.

The charter's transnational element was its commitment to peace, which aligned them to other international organisations and common goals during the context of possible nuclear warfare during the Cold War. It encouraged women to

[277] Ibid.

become politically active while also forming links and networks with women abroad. The success of the charter lay in that it was an all-inclusive document for men and women of all races, classes and creeds across South Africa. This inclusiveness was further illustrated in the Federation's membership, which consisted of various political organisations and trade unions and was committed to representing all women regardless of race or creed.

This stance worked alongside the Freedom Charter and became the Federation's aim and liberation movement's goal. Unlike the Freedom Charter, the Women's Charter functioned in isolation when it was created in 1954 and it was never mentioned or used again in meetings or protests after the Federation's inaugural conference. This was a very different experience to that of the Freedom Charter, which was the main focus at the Congress Alliance and formed the basis of discussions held. Emphasis was placed on freedom and unity, with correspondence ending in 'Forward to Freedom', where sex, class, race, and so forth were not relevant, as all South Africans had the right to freedom.

The Freedom Charter, compared to the Women's Charter, reached a wider audience. It was made up of an alliance of anti-apartheid organisations and the government believed it was a threat to national security and had the potential to cause civil unrest. Secret police were present at the two-day Congress Alliance event, taking notes about the Freedom Charter and proceedings at the event, to report back to the prime minister and eventually use as evidence in the Treason Trial. This signifies the national attention the charter received and just how much they were perceived as a national threat, due to the largest historical gathering of anti-apartheid organisations.

The Federation's ideological shift from a feminist perspective to one that was all-inclusive and active within the national liberation movement was clear in their membership and protests. FEDSAW represented multiple organisations and was multiracial, fighting against legislation and proposed legislation that would disadvantage non-white South Africans. The Federation became known for the anti-pass campaigns which had been adopted earlier. These campaigns protested against black women having to carry passes, which would further cripple their mobility making them more vulnerable to being arrested, threatening their livelihoods, dependents and employment. It was with this campaign that FEDSAW organised the largest protest in South Africa in history for its time. On 9 August 1956,

FEDSAW led a protest with 20,000 people to the Prime Minister's office at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. This act of defiance and bravery defined the organisation and earned them even more respect from their male counterparts, who would start to see the Federation's value in representing women in the national liberation movement.

The Federation's protesting style was one that was vibrant, filled with song and dance. This sense of performativity demonstrated their assertiveness by having their voices heard, quite literally, while also celebrating the ability to speak out and protest in solidarity. FEDSAW saw it as an honour and duty to ensure women were part of the wider political dialogue against apartheid policies.

By contrast, the Black Sash, who were formed a year later, were racially exclusive to white women, and protested in silence while wearing a black sash as their symbol. They believed in fighting against the Senate Bill which proposed removing coloureds from the Common Voters' Roll. When this was passed, there was a split in the organisation, leading to their ideological shift from one of exclusion and being solely focused on the Senate Bill, to focusing on human rights and integrating more with other opposition organisations in the national liberation movement.

By 1957, their shift towards human rights took place where they started to work alongside organisations such as the PAC, and support human rights in general. The FEDSAW and Black Sash both supported the Declaration of Human Rights by the late 1950s. The Freedom Charter was compared to the Declaration of Human Rights; their similarities were that they both stood for basic rights for all people and eradicating all forms of discrimination. The contrast was that the Freedom Charter was a direct response to the South African political system and apartheid. Despite this, human rights as a common goal and transnational idea unified the FEDSAW and Black Sash to the rest of the world.

How did these ideological stances influence the direction of the organisations? The FEDSAW's direction was adjusted at their inaugural event and evident in their transnational activities, which all took place before their first protest in October 1955. By the time they started being represented as an organisation abroad, the Federation were already set in their direction.

By contrast, the Sash's change of direction took place several years after being created, which confused the public, political comrades, the international community and even members within the organisation. In both organisations, these

shifts took place due to a newer generation leading the organisations, while also responding to apartheid.

While these ideological changes were taking place, so too were their transnational interactions, which further cemented and defined the FEDSAW and Black Sash's role in anti-apartheid activism. This issue will be further explored in the following two chapters, shedding light on how these organisations used their ideologies to forge relationships abroad and gather international support for the fight against apartheid.

Chapter 4: Going beyond borders: Expanding FEDSAW's influence internationally

Introduction

The FEDSAW's under-analysed transnational networks and connections take centre stage in this chapter. Transnationalism in this thesis is defined as the movement of ideas, ideologies, knowledge and individuals, that go beyond borders. By the time FEDSAW was created in 1954, it deliberately integrated an international outlook in its aims, as they wanted to connect with other women's organisations that were fighting for common aims such as world peace. This was reflected in their constitution, which stated that the Federation wanted to cooperate with 'other organisations with similar aims in South Africa and throughout the world'[1], and the transnational nature of the organisation was embedded in the organisation from its conception.

The international links the Federation had with the rest of the world are clear in their aims, which were declared in their inaugural conference. Within their eight aims, two were focused specifically on contributing to international peace and the wider international community. The significance behind this indicates transnationalism and international connections were a fundamental part of the organisation, its identity and overall ideology.

Therefore, transnationalism was a strategic objective for FEDSAW. This was not only demonstrated in their constitution and organisational aims, but also the individuals that led the organisation. Key figures such as Ray Alexander, Hilda Bernstein, Helen Joseph and Lilian Ngoyi were prominent members in FEDSAW and were also actively involved in the international arena of fighting against apartheid and advocating for world peace. These women were South African and FEDSAW representatives at events in the early 1950s and used their status and roles as women and mothers to advocate for international and national peace. Bernstein and Alexander, FEDSAW's co-founders, had experience in other political organisations, mainly the Communist Party of South Africa and the Food and Canning Workers Union. These organisations had strong international links, and shared experiences

[1] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Aa1.1, FEDSAW constitution, 17 April 1954, p. 3.

through transnational events. This was fundamental to both Bernstein and Alexander before FEDSAW was created, and inevitably became an important attribute of the Federation.

These key figures played an important role in ensuring that the organisation had an international outlook, and also importantly contributed to the movement of ideas and experiences between South African women and the international community. FEDSAW's involvement in the WIDF's Congress of Mothers, World Peace Council and International Women's Day celebrations illustrated how they used their connections and events such as conferences to further promote the Federation's aims, while also publicising the anti-apartheid movement and mobilising international support for their cause in fighting against apartheid and injustice as women. The most extensive event the FEDSAW attended was a European and Asian tour organised by the WIDF, which allowed Ngoyi and Dora Tamana to travel to different countries and become educated on different political systems in countries such as the UK, China, Madagascar and Iran, and learnt about socio-political issues these women faced such as the lack of political representation, no access to education and limited health rights. This tour helped recharge the women with even more focus and determination to fight against apartheid and mobilise as much support for the national liberation movement as possible.

These international links also strengthened FEDSAW leaders' roles in anti-apartheid activism and the national liberation movement, through increasing their networks and exposure to women's issues around the world in different political contexts. Their transnational actions were seen by the NP as challenging South African apartheid law through breaking laws, which would go on to interpret the FEDSAW as being transgressive by the late 1950s. This was illustrated where the South African government used the Federation's international links against them in the Treason Trial which will be discussed later in the chapter, and would go on to ban opposition organisations in the 1960s.

The FEDSAW recognised the powerful influence the international community could have on South Africa's racial policies. Having connections in the international community meant the Federation could generate further support when fighting against apartheid. Joseph believed the international community had the power to challenge apartheid, specifically that of the African votes, due to 'moral and economic

pressure' [2] the international community would place on the white nationalist government. During the Treason Trial from 1956 until 1961, Joseph used herself as an example of a white elector who changed her mind about racial policies due to moral pressure she felt when exposed to the Defiance Campaign.

By examining FEDSAW's transnational links this chapter builds on the limited previous research about the FEDSAW's overall role in South African history. Walker's monograph 'Women and Resistance in South Africa' is the only published secondary literature focused solely on FEDSAW and its contribution to South African and women's history. Walker's research, in combination with personal accounts about the Federation such as those from Bernstein, Alexander, Joseph and Ngoyi, provides an in-depth understanding of how the FEDSAW functioned. These sources were written in the 1980s and were personified by a Marxist historiographical perspective, focusing specifically on the roles of class and race in situating the Federation in South African history. All of these sources glance over the Federation's international links, and no scholarship currently offers an in-depth analysis of the role international links played in the Federation's aims or ideological stance. Therefore, this chapter's original contribution investigates why FEDSAW's transnational element has not been studied before, and rewrites the Federation's roles and influences on South African history, through analysing its transnational connections and experiences. This chapter challenges scholars to re-analyse and re-address women's contribution against apartheid while investigating the complexity of mobilising women and the international community to support the Federation in their crusade against apartheid's injustices.

This chapter will unpick the complexity behind the Federation's international networks by analysing FEDSAW's relationship to transnationalism in two sections. The first is the origins of FEDSAW's transnationalism, which analyses the aims that promoted and encouraged international involvement and engagement from its inception. By doing so, this analysis will specifically focus on how their organisational aims encouraged their transnational outlook. This will be followed by analysing key individuals within the Federation, who were main connectors with the international community.

[2] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1812, Treason Trial records, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,922.

The second section in this chapter is the FEDSAW's transnationalism in action, and addresses the international events FEDSAW attended and the organisations they had alliances with. This includes their collaborations and roles in events such as their participation in International Women's Day in March 1955; their roles in the World Peace Council; and their relationship with the WIDF which led to a number of FEDSAW delegates attending meetings, conferences and even having a tour of Europe and Asia. Through this analysis, one can understand who they were connected to or networked with; and how this affected their overall aims as an organisation. This chapter argues that the FEDSAW consciously and strategically adopted transnationalism to achieve its aims, increase awareness about apartheid and form alliances with other international organisations.

Origins of FEDSAW's Transnationalism

The FEDSAW's international links were demonstrated at their inauguration with the adoption of the Women's Charter. These included eight main aims such as the right to vote; the right to employment equality; the right to equal rights with men in relation to property, marriage and children; free and compulsory education for all children to promote their development, the removal of laws that prohibited one's movement; to build and strengthen the women's movement in the national liberation movement; to cooperate with other organisations with similar aims in South Africa and the rest of the world; and lastly to strive for peace throughout the world.[3] These aims, while ambitious, demonstrates the wide array of issues the Federation was hoping to address and represent in the organisation and gives historians clues on where they stood internationally and how they wanted to represent themselves abroad.

The last two aims, in particular, highlight the organisation's attitude towards the global community and their conscious aim of developing international links with similar organisations. Their goals 'to cooperate with other organisations with similar aims in South Africa and the rest of the world, and strive for peace throughout the world'[4] give one an insight into the kinds of alliances the Federation would make

[3] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, AC.1,6.2, Women's Charter. 17 April 1954, p. 1.
[4] Ibid.

internationally. The overall aim of these alliances was to fight for peace, which was their common goal.

In order to achieve their eighth aim of 'striving for permanent peace throughout the world',[5] there was recognition that women should unite. Ngoyi's speech highlighted this at a FEDSAW conference on 11 and 12 August 1956, where she stated 'women of South Africa must join with women of the world in demanding and end to the atomic bomb experiments and the outlawing of war between nations'[6] demonstrating that under the leadership of someone such as Ngoyi, there was a strong emphasis on working together and uniting as women across the world, especially for peace. This approach was shared amongst other FEDSAW leaders and members. Fatima Seedat stated at a FEDSAW meeting 'let us draw inspiration from the dramatic changes taking place outside our country– changes in our favour, one-third of the world population have decided to build a new society free from exploitation.'[7] There was significant emphasis on international connections and the importance of these when building a democratic and equal state. Seedat referred to how relationships with international organisations affected South African women positively as there was a new wave of equality taking place where most women abroad had or were on their way to getting the vote, but they were fighting new battles alongside men such as employment benefits and so forth.

The Federation used the international environment to understand and further cement themselves in an ideological setting. Ideologically, they placed themselves with women peace activists in the USA, Europe, Asia and Latin America.[8] This is evident in speeches given by FEDSAW leaders such as Ngoyi during the Treason Trials as well as other documents the FEDSAW created such as the Women's Charter. FEDSAW leaders such as Joseph and Ngoyi were also involved in the World Peace Council,[9] where they represented South Africa. The drive for world peace was linked to the overall political context of the time, where the Cold War threatened world peace and stability, and there was longing for a peaceful and more just country. This perspective linked FEDSAW to a collective international movement

[5] Ibid.
[6] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1812, Lilian Ngoyi, F36, p. 23,076.
[7] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, Fatima Seedat, F36, p. 23,097.
[8] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes,* p. 214.
[9] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records, Reference: AD1812, Helen Joseph, F12, Vol. 38, p. 7547.

fighting for peace, and in this sense helped introduce the organisation to similar organisations.

FEDSAW had international connections with other organisations and used these connections to promote COPE, the national liberation movement and the overall fight against apartheid. As highlighted at their first national conference, organisations who supported their cause included WIDF, the Union of French Women, Congress of Canadian Women and the German Democratic League[10] and most FEDSAW correspondence ended with the words 'yours fraternally', [11] demonstrating the link with other organisations but also the sense of unity within the Federation. According to the COPE, their bulletin in 1954, 500 copies were sent to people and organisations overseas.[12] This bulletin called for volunteers to carry out the work and mobilise people to fight against apartheid policy. This illustrated the FEDSAW had international connections and support from when they were first created, and they valued their international contacts in helping them to achieve their aims, which was inclusive of fighting for justice in South Africa and world wide. This also revealed the far-reaching links the FEDSAW had with international organisations, even if they were not exhaustive in nature, and the fight for solidarity that linked the organisations with common aims of fighting for international peace.

FEDSAW's international links were created before the Federation formally began, and were carried through by key individuals in the 1940s who would go on to establish the organisation. Josie Palmer, FEDSAW founder, was also involved in another political organisation that emphasised the importance of international links. The Transvaal All– Women's Union was the Federation's forerunner,[13] and was created at an International Women's Day meeting with the aim of creating a 'non-colour bar women's organisation'[14] that strived for world peace. The union had strong links with the WIDF, and according to newspapers, was created specifically to be able to affiliate with the WIDF.[15] It was led by individuals from various opposition parties and trade unions, such as Hetty Du Preez (Garment Worker's Union),

[10] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.6.1, Women's Charter. 17 April 1954, p.7.
[11] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Db2– correspondence from Helen Joseph to the FEDSAW Transvaal Region.
[12] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A1985, Q special topics, COPE bulletin, August 1954, Vol. 2, p. 2.
[13] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 87.
[14] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 101.
[15] Ibid.

Suriakala Patel (SAIC), Hilda Bernstein and Josie Palmer (both from the CPSA), which increased their exposure, impact and transnational links.

FEDSAW co-founder, Hilda Bernstein, was also a member of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) before creating the Federation. In 1941, the CPSA's annual conference passed a resolution to create an organisation that would represent working women[16] and aligned themselves with the WIDF, also created in 1941. This contributed to the CPSA's decision to create a national organisation that could affiliate with an international organisation such as the WIDF.[17] Therefore the South African Communist Party was aware of the need for the international development of the organisation as well as the creation of a national women's organisation. This development was further encouraged by external factors such as the Cold War, where the division of ideologies between the USA and Soviet Union encouraged individuals such as Bernstein and political parties to ideologically align themselves. Not only was the CPSA an important organisation that would go on to organise women, getting them involved in and aware of international events, but they also had strong ties with the WIDF.

Additionally, Ray Alexander was undoubtedly one of the most influential women in South African politics in the 1940s and early 1950s. She was incredibly well connected and stayed in correspondence with all women regardless of their political affiliation. With one of her contacts in the CPSA, Alexander co-created the FEDSAW, but did not take part in the organisation due to the government's perceived threat of her influence in politics. She was officially forbidden from politics under the Suppression of Communism Act (1950), she was banned from the FEDSAW and Congress of the People, and was told not to be a member of the following organisations, otherwise she would face prosecution: WIDF, COD, Forum Club, SA Peace Council, World Peace Council, and many other organisations related to trade unions and smaller political organisations.[18] She was also banned from taking part in any trade union activity that was barred under the Industrial Conciliation Act (1938).[19] Her role in South African politics was threatening to the government in the 1950s, but that did not stop her from encouraging women leaders to continue fighting against apartheid.

[16] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 100.
[17] Ibid.
[18] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ad1.1, Correspondence from Minister of Justice, C Swart to Ray Alexander, 28 September 1954.
[19] Ibid.

Alexander had strong international links. Originally from Latvia, she moved to South Africa as a teenager and got involved in trade unions. She had links with the WIDF from the early 1950s when she was invited to a WIDF meeting in Copenhagen in 1953.[20] She was unable to attend as she did not have a passport but was able to send Ayesha Dawood, an ANC member who worked closely with the FCWU, in her place to represent South Africa.[21] The fact she was invited to this event is important as it demonstrates Alexander had a strong relationship with the WIDF and therefore had an opportunity for South Africa to have a strong presence internationally.

Unfortunately, the origins of Alexander's relationship with the WIDF are still unclear, with no archival information documenting how it came about. In December 1955, the Special Branch raided Alexander's home and place of work, where she managed to hide correspondence that would later be posted to various organisations, one of which was the WIDF.[22] While this letter has not been found and could possibly have been intercepted and destroyed by Special Branch members, Alexander's act in itself illustrates something important about her as a political activist. Not only did she have an inkling that her home was going to be raided and that she needed to make sure relevant organisations heard from her, but importantly Alexander understood that international links with organisations such as the WIDF posed a risk to the activists involved and were a threat to the government. The threat of South African women's international links and the influence they had in the South African political context in the 1950s and '60s, was far greater than has ever been documented. Their correspondence, movement and international links were all monitored, and the fact that they were making international connections with similar organisations fighting beyond apartheid was intimidating for the South African government while empowering for how South African women organised themselves.

As a result of their links abroad and political activism, prominent women leaders were halted in their political activities and barred from politics. The banning of founding leaders such as Alexander, fellow trade unionist Hetty McLeod and Bernstein under the Suppression of Communism Act resulted in newer leadership being brought to the forefront of the organisation. Ngoyi became the FEDSAW president, taking over from Ida Mtwana, while Joseph took over from Alexander and

[20] Alexander, *All my Life and All my Strength*, p. 246.
[21] Alexander, *All my Life and All my Strength*, p. 246.
[22] Ibid., p. 285.

become the national secretary.[23] The baton for continuing the Federation's transnational influence was passed to Ngoyi and Joseph, who had the willingness and openness to continue to foster international connections to achieve world peace and human rights, using these connections as leverage to fight against apartheid. These women brought a new mind–set when working with international organisations, and saw the strategic benefit for FEDSAW being linked abroad.

It was important for the FEDSAW to connect women and establish links with organisations abroad, thereby gaining support for the Federation while also solidifying their role and becoming part of an unspoken international women's movement. This was recorded in Ngoyi's speech given at Wits University where she stated:

> Women everywhere want the same things, and fight world-wide campaigns for education, for culture, for recreation and happiness for their children. Our Federation is a link with women in other parts of Africa, part of the fight to lift not just ourselves, but the whole African continent out of illiteracy, backwardness, disease and hardship towards a new level of development.[24]

Ngoyi highlighted similarities South African women had with women all over the world, reiterating they were joining a wider movement of solidarity beyond the national liberation movement where women were also fighting for world peace. The latter was done by stating that the fight was not just exclusively for South African women, but rather all women on the African continent. It is unclear why she specifically mentioned the African continent in isolation, however she gives the reader a clue through speaking about the extreme 'backwardness' of the continent, as opposed to the clear progression of other countries' women's movements such as in the USA and UK. It was uncommon for the FEDSAW to focus only on Africa in particular in their speeches, and this is one of the few times this was observed in archival materials.

[23] Berger, *Threads of Solidarity,* p. 87.
[24] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records, Reference: AD1812, Ngoyi's Speech, Wits University (date unknown), F4, Vol. 11, p. 2133.

Ngoyi and Joseph shared the same views of international connections. Joseph also advocated the need for the Federation's international links at various conferences. In 1955 at FEDSAW's national conference, Joseph stated in a speech:

> This afternoon we turn our thoughts outside South Africa. Let us think of other mothers in other countries all over the world. Since we are sisters, their problems are our problems.[25]

Her speech was used against her during the Treason Trial as evidence that she was conspiring against the government by encouraging international political activity. She had a clear sense of interconnectedness by stating 'we are sisters' and 'their problems are our problems'. Despite the different contexts, women were still fighting against inequality while fighting to secure a peaceful and safe environment for their children.

Joseph saw links with the wider international community as fundamental in fighting against apartheid within the country. Fighting against apartheid was synonymous with having international networks and connections. Joseph was quoted as saying that 'our struggle for freedom and liberation is part of the struggle throughout the world for peace and freedom'.[26] She interpreted this as being part of a global community and therefore forming part of the worldwide links even if that was not a conscious decision. In her speeches, Joseph also compared South Africa to other countries such as Kenya, Malaysia and so forth, situating them in an international environment and grouping similar attitudes and values. The Treason Trial constantly interrogated leaders about their role in communism, support for the ideology and their links to specific countries such as the Soviet Union and China. This interrogation and paranoia reiterated the threat and power international links had over the government.

Before Ngoyi and Tamana returned from Europe, Joseph highlighted in a speech the need for interconnectivity between what was happening in South Africa and the rest of the world. 'We must think of world affairs. What good would it be to free the people of South Africa if it is to be destroyed by war, and so it is all tied up

[25] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records, Reference: AD1812, Helen Joseph, F12, Vol. 38, p. 7,547.
[26] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records, Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 14,032.

with our problems here.'[27] This restates that she saw South Africa as part of the world's problems and issues, and apartheid did not stop South Africa from being part of the international community. Joseph brought South Africa to the forefront by highlighting how South Africans needed to think of 'world affairs', illustrating how important it was to situate South Africa within the international context. This also reinforced that it was in South Africa and the international community's best interests to get rid of apartheid and strive for world peace.

This approach was contradicted by Joseph's beliefs expressed during her interrogation in the Treason Trial. Despite feeling that there was an international community where there was support amongst women's organisations such as the WIDF, Joseph felt that this did not form part of a wider movement. Joseph claimed during the trial that the national liberation movement was not linked to an international liberation struggle and they were separate entities.[28] This was in response to lawyers stating the congress was linked to a wider international liberation struggle, which was inevitably linked to violence. Joseph was cunning to respond in this way because while she emphasised the Congress was not linked to an international liberation struggle that involved violence, it did not mean that they did not support an international liberation struggle without violence. Joseph was careful with her words, while her background and beliefs about passive resistance shaped her understanding and support of the Congress.

The international context was a threat in itself towards the functioning of the Federation. The state convicted people who it perceived as communist through the Suppression of Communism Act. During the Treason Trial Joseph proclaimed that all people, whether they were communist or not, should fight for freedom.[29] Therefore the fight in the South African context was not only about a political ideology, which was a threat during the Cold War, but rather a human rights issue where discrimination and injustice was the norm. Within the context of the Treason Trial and Cold War, it would be seen as a serious threat and danger to openly speak about and support international connections and networks, especially with organisations that might have communist or socialist undertones. To have international links in an otherwise isolated country was a threat on its own. With this in mind, Joseph

[27] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records, Reference: AD1812, F12, Vol. 38, p. 7,547, Speech by Joseph, July/ September 1955 place unknown.
[28] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records, Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,941.
[29] Ibid.

strategically chose what she was going to say during the court case for the safety of her comrades and organisation.

FEDSAW's transnationalism in action

The Federation embraced its international links early on. Celebrating International Women's Day (IWD) was part of the international legacy the FEDSAW inherited from its earlier founders. In 1946, an IWD meeting was attended by a wide array of women and organisations, including Bernstein (CPSA), Bertha Solomon, the SAIC and the League of Women's Voters.[30] This event in itself was used as a way of uniting women across political boundaries and from different countries.

By 1955, FEDSAW's first international event was focused on the IWD. To show solidarity with their international counterparts, FEDSAW celebrated IWD in 1955. On 20 March 1955, Josie Palmer, FEDSAW's then Transvaal region chairman, organised the celebrations.[31] The event consisted of speeches from women from all races, including Moosa (Indian), Dison (coloured), Joseph (white) and Josie Palmer (black). [32] Palmer emphasised the importance of strengthening the women's organisations and for the first time in its history, FEDSAW would be sending a representative overseas to the Council of Women's International Democratic Federation[33] later that year. Joseph used this event as an opportunity to discuss the international conferences that were planned for the WIDF, specifically the international women's congress and the World Congress of Mothers in July 1955.[34] This could have been used as a way of not only promoting the events but also scoping out potential delegates to send and represent the FEDSAW and South Africa. By speaking about these occasions, Joseph also demonstrated that she was the key person or contact who not only knew about the council, but also had networks beyond South Africa. The resolution from the Johannesburg meeting was that FEDSAW would support the international Congress of Mothers and hold their own Congress of Mothers in the Transvaal[35] where they would appeal against the

[30] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa*,p. 100.
[31] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae1.1. International Women's Day.
[32] Ibid.
[33] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae1.2, Circular Report issues by the Transvaal Region, 'International Women's Day in Johannesburg', March 1955.
[34] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae1.1, International Women's Day.
[35] Ibid.

atomic bomb and promote world peace.[36] The significance of having both hubs represented meant there was a wider exposure of women regardless of their race, class, education or profession. FEDSAW saw the importance of creating international connections as this would strengthen South African women's organisations in their fight against apartheid by creating more allies, and would also increase international awareness of the apartheid regime. The relationship with the WIDF was the Federation's first formal, transnational link during its existence as an organisation.

The celebrations took place in FEDSAW's two regional hubs: Johannesburg and Cape Town. The agenda for both meetings was to fight for peace in South Africa and internationally.[37] A Congress Alliance spokesperson stated 'let us ask for peace with one voice so the South African government and other governments will be made to listen and carry out our wishes'.[38] There was a clear sense of solidarity in working together and achieving the aims that would benefit collective organisations and women's rights. By stating 'other' governments and 'one voice', there is a sense of an all-inclusive approach.

FEDSAW's decision to celebrate International Women's Day was also indicative of their support for the progression of women internationally. Prominent female leaders gave speeches on women's rights as well as racial equality for men and women.[39] Having this discussion about both women's rights and equal rights, reflected FEDSAW's attitude towards women's rights and, later under different leadership, adjusting this to focus on racial equality for all South African men and women. The Federation aligned itself internationally with peace. 'We know the struggle for our liberation, for the freedom of our people, for the well-being of our children is closely connected with the struggle for peace.'[40] There was an understanding and acceptance that however isolated South Africa was from the rest of the world due to apartheid laws, there was still a connectedness with the rest of the world in the common fight for peace.

The FEDSAW took it upon themselves to unite all women within South Africa, and connect South African women with their international colleagues in fighting for

[36] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae1.2, Circular Report issues by the Transvaal Region, 'International Women's Day in Johannesburg', March 1955.
[37] New Age, 'World Conference of Mothers: Four South African Delegates', *New Age* 1 (37) (7 July 1955), p. 6.
[38] Ibid.
[39] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae1.1, International Women's Day.
[40] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, Ey 2.4, p. 4.

human rights. South African women supported this appeal and stated 'join women of all countries who demand peace, friendship between people and banning atomic weapons'.[41] The assertion 'join women of all countries' implies a sense of community where all women were welcome, but also many women were already part of this peace movement. Atomic weapons were brought into the discussion, acknowledging the wider context of the Cold War, and the biggest threat to peace at that time.

The atmosphere at these meetings was celebratory and cheerful. Like the FEDSAW protests, the women who attended the meeting wearing vibrant colours and traditional outfits, such as Indian women wore saris and African women wearing the ANC colours (black, gold and green).[42] Being this vibrant and flamboyant at meetings and protests became one of FEDSAW's characteristics. They wanted to make their presence known, both visually with their colourful outfits, but also audibly through their singing, making the protests seem like a celebration of progress rather than of anger.

The attitudes and nature of FEDSAW's protests has been reflected differently in secondary literature and archival sources. This is particularly clear in primary sources such as the Treason Trial archives and interview transcripts. On the one hand, scholars such as Walker state the FEDSAW protesters were defined as militant in that they were unafraid of being arrested or police intimidation.[43] For example, when protesting against passes, they were willing to burn passes at police stations and even be arrested. However, primary sources such as interviews and Treason Trial materials reveal the protests were not violent at all but rather made a point regarding their dancing and singing.[44] The Federation's protests did not condemn or invoke violence.[45] This demonstrates a disparity between what has been recorded in primary sources and written about in secondary literature, and highlights the importance of historical judgement when addressing these different perspectives. With reference to the nature of FEDSAW's protests, multiple primary sources have echoed the same message of the federation being peaceful and not provoking violence, which as an academic, leads one to question Walker's interpretation of the federation, the motivation of her work and how it forms her

[41] Ibid.
[42] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae1.2, Circular Report issues by the Transvaal Region, 'International Women's Day in Johannesburg', March 1955.
[43] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 101.
[44] Interview with Sophia Williams-De Bruyn, 29 June 2006, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Johannesburg, South Africa.
[45] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, EY2.4, WIDF–Special Information Bulletin, Berlin April 1955, p. 4.

historiographical account of the organisation. Walker's work fits within a Marxist historiographical trend, when South African history was written with emphasis on class and a more militant approach in fighting against apartheid. While my thesis acknowledges Walker's perspective, this study places the importance back on the primary sources to analyse how the organisation saw their form of protest in their own words. The federation interpreted their protests and campaigns as celebratory events, which connected them to other international organisations.

The IWD celebration created a pathway for women to link to other organisations through correspondence, forging their own international links. FEDSAW informed the WIDF that they had celebrated International Women's Day in Cape Town in 1955[46] in their annual special bulletin. Additionally, correspondence from the Congress of Canadian Women to Joseph on the 3rd of February 1956 stated that the Canadian congress sent 'warm fraternal greetings and love to all women in your homeland'[47] and that only through an 'united international effort can peace be achieved on a global scale'.[48] Again this exemplifies that there were strong international links emerging between the FEDSAW and other women's organisations. The details of the relationship between these two organisations are unclear, however President Rae Luckock of the Congress of Canadian Women was also a member of the World Peace Council and was likely to have met Joseph and Ngoyi at the World Peace Council and Assembly meetings. Unfortunately, only one letter was found between these two organisations. However this highlighted the small circle of networking between individuals and organisations but also how events such as the IWD united women and organisations that might never have crossed paths or be linked together.

The World Peace Council (WPC) was the first international event the Federation attended in 1955. The FEDSAW's commitment to creating and maintaining world peace went beyond their Women's Charter in 1954 and was illustrated in the Federation's attendance in 1955 when the WPC hosted a World Peace Assembly on 26 June in Helsinki. The Federation sent FEDSAW member Tamara Baker[49] to represent the Federation and South Africa. The assembly was

[46] Ibid.
[47] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Db1– correspondence from the Congress of Canadian Women, 3 February 1956.
[48] Ibid.
[49] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD 1812, Helen Joseph, F12, Vol. 38, p. 7,547.

not focused on race or gender, with the main message that issues that were discussed were common struggles many countries experienced at the time, such as independence and achieving peace.[50] This transcended issues related to class, sex, race and working unanimously to overcome trials and tribulations. This international setting was a reminder that South African opposition organisations such as the FEDSAW were not alone in fighting against racial discrimination and human rights violations, but also that there was a wider community with additional issues beyond race that were worth fighting about.

The above message is supported through FEDSAW's archival sources about the World Peace Assembly and Congress of Mothers. Baker's formal report does not exist in the archives, however there was a handwritten note detailing some of what Baker spoke about after her trip abroad. She reported back the facts she learnt about the after-effects of the atomic bomb. She also stated that 'Peace is in jeopardy so long as racism exists',[51] highlighting the direct effects of apartheid on the rest of the world as well as the assembly's inclusive nature.

The World Peace Assembly was well attended and was an excellent networking opportunity for Baker. Approximately 2000 delegates from all over the world attended the assembly[52] with different skills sets and experience. According to an article detailing the event, the assembly consisted of a diverse community and represented everyone from housewives to ex– members of parliament.[53] The event ended with each delegate going home with a piece of a pine tree[54] that was used as a symbol of peace and unity throughout the event. The significance of this lay in the fact that delegates were now connected through attending the event and were united in solidarity and their commitment to fight for world peace.

It was taking part in these kinds of events and being associated with the WPC that shaped and influenced the FEDSAW's international perspective. Joseph believed the WIDF contributed to the 'establishment and growth of the World Peace Movement'.[55] Describing this as a peace movement demonstrates there is an additional transnational viewpoint linked to the Federation, from fighting for racial and

[50] C Williams, ' People for Peace', *Fighting Talk*, August 1955, p.5.
[51] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, handwritten notes about the World Peace Assembly and the Congress of Mothers, p. 2.
[52] C Williams, 'People for Peace', *Fighting Talk*, August 1955, p. 5.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Db2.2 Joseph correspondence to FEDSAW, January 1956.

gender equality as well as human rights, but also world peace. As such, the transnational link to FEDSAW is not as clear-cut as one might expect. There were multiple avenues, motivations and aims within the organisation that aligned to several other organisations' aims and motivations, as well as the international context. For example, the WIDF was open to men and women and was inclusive for all those interested in fighting for world peace.

Just as the FEDSAW saw themselves as part of the national liberation movement, they also saw themselves as part of the international community. Ngoyi was a former member of the WPC and was the representative for the Federation on this council, while also being a member of the South African Peace Council (SAPC).[56] She believed in peace and justice for all people; where her beliefs went beyond apartheid and were reflected in FEDSAW's aims and actions in the organisation.

Ironically, while being interrogated during the Treason Trial, Ngoyi's words were manipulated and used against her. She was accused of denouncing the 'the present state form, and demanded its destruction and replacement by a different state' [57] in one of her past speeches. These were speeches where she had advocated for a democratic system where all races had the same rights to education, housing, employment and so forth. Her involvement and actions in the WPC and SAPC clarified her intentions of promoting world peace while fighting against injustices and specifically against apartheid. Unfortunately, Ngoyi's individual interrogation file from the Treason Trial is not in the archival collection, as some of the Treason Trial volumes have been reported missing, leaving the assumption her file is one of those missing.

The government attempted to find fault and an ulterior motive in the SAPC. Other members of the SAPC tried to defend their involvement in striving for national and international peace. Joseph, also a SAPC member,[58] stated during the Treason Trial that the 'South African Peace Council would support any country which genuinely strove to promote peace'[59] no matter whether the country was understood

[56] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F36, Vol. 129, p. 23,062.
[57] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F36, Vol. 129, p. 23,069.
[58] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,972.
[59] Ibid.

to be communist or not. Political ideology did not hinder or dictate people's fight for world peace.

The World Peace Assembly demonstrated 'increased growth in numbers of leading figures and ordinary people who are associating themselves with the peace movement'.[60] Testifying that people were associating themselves with the movement implied this was creating a movement with its associated networks. Sonia Bunting, a prominent CPSA member, believed the country needed to be part of this peace movement and 'South Africa must unite all races with the rest of the world.'[61] There was no mention of gender or class, but rather unity and basic human rights for all people. While South Africa's racial issues were problematic and dominant in South Africa, the Federation still had a commitment to the wider international community to keep peace. In this sense, FEDSAW's duty and fight for justice was for South Africa and internationally.

The longest pre-existing international connection the FEDSAW leaders had before it was created in 1954, was with the WIDF. The WIDF was the brainchild of the International Women's Congress that took place in 1945 in Paris, with the aim of establishing how women could fight for democracy while also preserving world peace.[62] FEDSAW endorsed this and incorporated fighting for world peace as one of its aims.

The relationship between the WIDF and FEDSAW preceded the Federation's inauguration and emerged with two prominent leaders, specifically Bernstein and Alexander, who had close contact with the organisation.[63] It is unclear whether there were any South African representatives in the first WIDF conference in 1945, however Bernstein attended the second conference in Prague in 1947 and used her position at this conference to draw attention to the conditions in South Africa.[64] Correspondence between the WIDF and individuals who would create FEDSAW started in 1952[65] when the Defiance Campaign was ending. This relationship did not end with the role of women, but was extended to youth as well where South Africans were encouraged to take part in World Youth Day in 1954.[66]

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[60] Sonia Bunting, 'Geneva Conference Must Inspire us to Greater Efforts', *New Age* 1 (37) (7 July 1955), p. 1.
[61] Ibid.
[62] New Age, 'World Conference of Mothers: Four South African Delegates', *New Age* 1 (37) (7 July 1955), p. 6.
[63] Joseph, *Side by Side*, p. 6.
[64] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 101.
[65] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1812, Ey2.2, Correspondence between WIDF and FEDSAW, 7 April 1954.
[66] Ibid.

The influence of the WIDF was felt in South Africa at the FEDSAW's first national gathering in 1954.[67] The FEDSAW directly acknowledged its links to the WIDF but also how the organisation directly influenced the FEDSAW's creation.[68] The Federation's transnational links were inevitable; they were founded by members with strong international links but also were well aware of the international community and how they contributed to it.

The FEDSAW valued its relationship with the WIDF. The Federation made an effort to remain in constant contact with them despite not being formally affiliated with the WIDF.[69] Additionally, the FEDSAW spoke openly about their relationship with the WIDF and stated 'FEDSAW are indebted to WIDF, which brought together so many women of the world, and helped us along the path of cooperation.'[70] Stating this to government lawyers during the Treason Trail and declaring the importance of international connections, illustrated how strongly Federation individuals believed in universal cooperation for human rights and how this was not a global threat but rather an obligation for South African women.

The WIDF supported the Federation's aims and encouraged FEDSAW members to fight against passes and other injustices in the country through exposing South African women to what was happening in other countries and increasing their support system and networks. FEDSAW's aims such as their fight against passes, were described by Joseph as being 'immeasurably strengthened by the support of women and other countries through the WIDF'.[71] Both Joseph and Ngoyi acknowledged how FEDSAW was supported and encouraged by the international community.

FEDSAW recognised the importance of the WIDF's international networks and ties, which also helped contribute to the Federation's aims, specifically striving for international cooperation and world peace.[72] Joseph stated during the Treason Trial interrogation that 'we may be separate, but we are not in isolation'.[73] This

[67] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Db2.2 Joseph correspondence to FEDSAW, January 1956.
[68] Ibid.
[69] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 66, p. 14,177.
[70] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, Helen Joseph, F4, Vol. 11, p. 2,136.
[71] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Db2.2 Joseph correspondence to FEDSAW, January 1956.
[72] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ea2.2, Demands put forward by Congress.
[73] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p, 13,952.

statement emphasised the link with the rest of the world and while apartheid was physically and ideologically isolating the country from the rest of the world, the reality is that South Africa was still part of a wider community, and there was a lot of support within and outside of the country for the national liberation struggle against the apartheid legislation.

FEDSAW believed they were supported by the WIDF and in a letter to the Transvaal region by Joseph, she emphasized this by stating 'we are not fighting alone, 144 million women of 66 countries, will watch us, support us and give us their encouragement. They know oppression in South Africa is a threat not only to all Africa, but to the world.'[74] There was a sense of belonging to an international network of women who were fighting for world peace. This is significant as the context at the time was one where apartheid attempted to physically and ideologically isolate political opposition from the rest of the world. And even during this attempt, the Federation could still connect itself with organisations such as the WIDF to find moral support in continuing to fight against injustices including apartheid.

The WIDF's influence was also exemplified in the Federation's publications. One of FEDSAW's earliest publications declared that the Federation was inspired by the WIDF[75] and publicised its influence through presenting that it represented 140 million women worldwide.[76] The Federation showed further support to the WIDF when Joseph sent through a message on behalf of the Federation stating 'South African women support your efforts for peace, freedom, security and happiness.'[77] In this sense, FEDSAW was well aware and conscious of where they saw themselves internationally and how they saw their organisation as part of a wider struggle for 'national liberation' regardless of race.[78] This reinforces that FEDSAW was focused on both the local and international impact, as they saw these two spheres complementing each other.

An important link the FEDSAW had with the WIDF was a lady named Molly Keid, who helped organise Tamana, Smith and Ngoyi to attend a WIDF council

[74] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Db2, correspondence from Helen Joseph to the FEDSAW Transvaal Region.
[75] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, A.c.1. FEDSAW's inaugural conference, April 1954, p. 3.
[76] Ibid.
[77] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Db.3.1, Helen Joseph's hand written notes.
[78] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, A.c.1. FEDSAW's inaugural conference, April 1954, p. 3.

meeting and the Congress of Mothers. After meeting the South African delegates in 1955, Keid stayed in touch with Tamana and was keen to keep them updated with the WIDF.[79] Keid was not discussed in detail in the document's minutes but was cited regularly in correspondence specifically about the WIDF and Congress of Mothers.

The Federation attempted to keep communication open between FEDSAW and the WIDF, and were actively encouraging their members to create external links and support women in other countries, while also increasing their awareness of what was happening internationally. For the WIDF's tenth anniversary, FEDSAW organised for its members to send messages of greetings that would be forwarded onto the WIDF.[80] The Federation were keen to act on their support for the WIDF from afar.

The FEDSAW and WIDF educated each other about women's international and national struggles for equality and world peace. Joseph wrote a letter to the FEDSAW, stressing the important relationship between the two organisations, and educating the rest of the Federation about the WIDF in general. The WIDF's main aims were focused on destroying fascism, securing democracy and women's rights, and creating a 'happy future' for their children.[81] Joseph used the materials from the WIDF to educate the South African women about women in other countries. 'The National Executive feels that we do not want the women who are in our Federation to be isolated from women in other parts of the world'.[82] There was the need to be inclusive but also to educate women about this all over the world. There was also recognition that women all over the world, despite their different contexts, were struggling against the same issues, which further unified the international connection.

While the Federation understood the importance of internationalism, they were unknowingly practising the twenty-first century definition of transnationalism through the movement of ideas, knowledge and individuals. The Federation adhered to the transnational definition of movement of ideas and perspectives. Joseph also

[79] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ad1.2, correspondence from Molly Keid to FEDSAW, 6 December 1955.
[80] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Db2.2 Joseph correspondence to FEDSAW, January 1956.
[81] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Db2.2 Joseph correspondence to FEDSAW, January 1956.
[82] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 66, p. 14,177.

believed the purpose of the WIDF conference was to bring 'women together from all parts of the world, where they could exchange their views'.[83] This demonstrates that this was an important forum to educate foreigners and the global community about what was happening in South Africa, while the South African delegates would learn about the plights of women in other countries as well, enabling the information exchange to take place. This, in essence, embodies the very concept of transnationalism where ideas travel and spread to different countries around the world. While transnationalism helped the FEDSAW reach out beyond South Africa and join with other women's organisations in search of peace, it also proved to be the very reason why the organisation got into trouble with the government during the Treason Trial.

The Treason Trial focused specifically on the threat of communism to national security and the well-being of South Africans, in the wider context of the Cold War. The WIDF united sixty-six countries including China and the Soviet Union. This was problematic for the Federation as it led to leaders such as Joseph being interrogated about the countries that had attended the WIDF conference, and why countries, specifically China and the Soviet Union, were brought up in speeches given by FEDSAW.[84] Joseph replied that she could not speak for Ray Alexander who wrote those speeches, and could not answer why she chose specific countries. The government's lawyers tried to get Joseph to admit the FEDSAW were working against the government by aligning themselves to so-called communist organisations and countries, and even tried to construe the WIDF's aim of world peace as a potential threat if it was led by communism.

During her interrogation in the Treason Trial, Joseph was asked if the WIDF were communist in their conference and used communist ideology in their proceedings. While she did not feel the WIDF was a communist organisation,[85] she stated that she attended the conference with the thought of seeing if the democratic Federation wanted to stay in touch with FEDSAW and have a mutual relationship where they kept each other up to date.[86] This highlighted that Joseph and the FEDSAW's motive for these events and conferences was to build networks and keep

[83] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 66, p. 14,191.
[84] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 66, p. 14,191.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.

updated with political developments in other countries. This information would be used to educate FEDSAW as well as the international community, therefore cultivating a symbiotic relationship.

Joseph's link with WIDF was evident when she travelled alone to a democratic Federation meeting in Switzerland in February 1955[87] and met women from all over the world while discussing the South African context.[88] The meeting was called due to the international threat of atomic warfare in the Cold War,[89] and had a direct impact on the Federation's eighth aim of preserving world peace. This was a tremendous opportunity for Joseph; she would be the FEDSAW and South Africa representative, giving insights into life in South Africa during apartheid, while also highlighting how women were organising themselves to fight against apartheid and inequality. As a result, she felt quite 'nervous and conscious about it'[90] as she would be the main representative at this conference promoting anti-apartheid activism.

Joseph was strategic about international connections and attended the WIDF meeting for three reasons. Firstly, her attendance would help plan the Congress of Mothers; secondly she wanted to collect information about other women in other countries to compare South African women's plight and share with the rest of the Federation when she returned home; and lastly she recognised the power of networking with a wider group of women from all over the world, building a larger support system. This was a well-respected event where many countries were represented. Joseph recalled that most countries were represented (except Canada and Australia).[91] FEDSAW believed and stated that their involvement in the international community would help support world peace and security.[92] By attending these kinds of events the Federation would have access to an international network of like-minded people who were focused on peace and human rights, putting them in a prime position to gain support and build allies.

As part of the information exchange, the WIDF also sponsored tours and were known for inviting delegates to congresses and sponsoring their tours in Europe and

[87] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F4 Vol. 13, pg. 5,640.
[88] Joseph, *Side by Side*, p. 7.
[89] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae1.1, International Women's Day.
[90] Joseph, *Side by Side*, p. 7.
[91] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 66. p. 5.
[92] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1812, EY2.4, WIDF– Special Information Bulletin, Berlin April 1955, p. 4.

parts of Asia,[93] as well as attending the Congress of Mothers conference. The FEDSAW decided to send two delegates from their popular provinces to attend the tour and Congress of Mothers.[94] This resulted in Ngoyi from the Transvaal region and Tamana from the Cape region being selected to represent the Federation and South Africa.

According to Meintjes, both women tried to leave South Africa initially by ship from Cape Town to Lausanne, Switzerland, but they were taken off the ship as they were travelling without passports.[95] Archival materials contradict Meintjes' claim, and Ngoyi and Tamana were in fact travelling with Amy Thornton (nee Rietstein) and Ros Ainsley's passports who were white supporters of the national liberation front in South Africa.[96] According to Joseph, it was not necessary for people to have passports to travel in Europe, but it was necessary to have a passport to leave South Africa.[97] Ngoyi and Tamana were taken off the ship and managed to get a document stating they were British citizens, thereby allowing them to travel to any protectorate legally.[98] They were desperate to get out of the country and attend the WIDF's congress and tour. It would have been easier to send Joseph or another white Federation member who had the necessary documentation, however having black members such as Ngoyi and Tamana attend gave them a once in a lifetime opportunity to go abroad while also enabling them to speak about their direct experience of apartheid, as black women were the most vulnerable under the racial policies in South Africa. This signifies the lengths that FEDSAW members went to in order to go abroad and get away from apartheid, but also just how important it was for the Federation to send members abroad to get support and make international connections.

This became a global trip that was also a new experience for both women, where for the first time they were treated and respected as human beings, rather than being judged on their race. Ngoyi claimed in her memoir that people spoke to her with respect and basic human rights which she as a black woman experienced for the first time in her life. She reflected 'I loved every moment of my stay abroad. I

[93] Joseph, *Side by Side*, p. 6.
[94] Ibid., p. 5.
[95] M Daymond et al., *Women Writing Africa: The Southern Region* (New York: Feminist Press: City University of New York, 2003), p. 240.
[96] Interview with Amy Thornton, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[97] Joseph, *Side by Side*, p. 7.
[98] Interview with Amy Thornton, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.

went to four provinces as a human being'[99]– the provinces she was referring to were during her trip to China. Being treated as a human being included having regular meals and daily baths, which Ngoyi and Tamana were not accustomed to,[100] having lived in squalor in South African rural areas. It was also strange that there was a white housecleaner who was 'doing their work'[101], referring to the racial division of work in South Africa, where black women were domestic servants, or maids, and white women were generally housewives if they were not in the work place as teachers or secretaries. This reiterated and advocated basic human rights, where transnationalism equated to human rights.

Attending this conference also meant that Ngoyi met many women from all over the world. The climax of the conference for her was a report given by a Madagascan woman who attended the conference with her baby on her back.[102] This personified that women could have multiple roles at once including having children while being politically active and attending conferences. In the South African context, women's roles were limited to domesticity, but elsewhere they were going beyond domesticity. This point was the valuable message from this conference for both Tamana and Ngoyi.

The tour was an important networking opportunity that remained with Ngoyi and Tamana for the rest of their lives. The two women travelled to countries such as Italy, England, Germany, Switzerland, China, Mongolia, the Soviet Union, then back to England and South Africa. Ngoyi remained in touch with people she had met for the rest of her life.[103] Once links and networks were created through the conference, the women kept these contacts throughout their lives. The conference was simply a way of introducing and combining like-minded people together, where networks might have begun as professional but soon became personal.

Ngoyi used this opportunity abroad to campaign for FEDSAW and anti-apartheid activism, in the hope for a multiracial and peaceful country. While in London, Ngoyi gave a speech in 1955 at Trafalgar Square 'to further the aims of the ANC in its fight against apartheid.'[104] This demonstrates that the European visit was

[99] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A2551, Lilian Ngoyi's Memoir, ZA HPRA, p. 15.
[100] Ibid., p. 12.
[101] Ibid., p. 13.
[102] Ibid., p. 15.
[103] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A2551, Lilian Ngoyi's Memoir, ZA HPRA, p. 15.
[104] M Daymond et al., *Women Writing Africa: The Southern Region* (New York: Feminist Press: City University of New York, 2003), p. 240.

not just one where Ngoyi and Tamana were meeting and networking with current and potential future contacts, but were proactive in using it as a way of fighting against apartheid and campaigning for racial equality in South Africa.

On a personal level, Ngoyi realised the amount of support there was externally for the opposition parties and organisations. After her trip abroad, she stated in a speech that 'there's always help from elsewhere'[105] where she recognised that there was an enormous amount of support internationally and the WIDF had created a strong network for women.

> In brief, I still say thanks to the W.I.D.F. for having made it possible for us to go and see China. I think– for us to go and see China, which is now within a period of five years is known as New China. I think this was the best time for us to see it while it is still shaking itself from dust into purity. This has shown us that, if we do our work amongst our people, especially the masses known as workers and peasants people who are heavy laden with sorrow, poverty and hunger, we shall one day speak as countries like China, where people say 'our government.'[106]

Ngoyi was inspired by her travels, where she could see first hand how a country such as China had overcame a turbulent past and was working towards a more promising future.[107] This gave her hope for South Africa and motivated her to continue fighting against injustices and inequality for South African men and women and create a more just government.

The experience of the tour and conference abroad had a direct impact on Ngoyi and Tamana's outlook on South African politics. Soon after returning from Europe, Ngoyi gave a speech at the Freedom Charter Committee meeting on 18 September 1955. Spoken in her native tongue, Sesotho, Ngoyi emphasised the international links and stated 'I bring you greetings from Europe.'[108] She reflected in her speech on the equality she was exposed to in Europe, and commented on how

[105] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A2551, Lilian Ngoyi's Memoir, ZA HPRA, p. 19.
[106] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, Lilian Ngoyi, F4 Vol. 13, p. 2,459.
[107] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.5.1, Ray Alexander, FEDSAW Inaugural address, 17 April 1954.
[108] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD 1812, F12, Vol. 38, p. 7,583.

there were no signs indicating whether a bench or entrance was for 'Europeans only'.[109] Public spaces were for all people who inhabited them, a sharp contrast to South Africa where public spaces were labelled according to race. Ngoyi went on to state that 'In Europe, there are countries which are free because of their liberation fighters,'[110] implying South Africa would become democratic one day because of people like herself and the national liberation movement which consisted of an army of liberation fighters. She looked to Europe as an example of how liberation from similar struggles had been achieved and how this could be implemented in South Africa.

Joseph and Ngoyi attended the Congress of Mothers (COM) on the Federation's behalf in Geneva. The literature on FEDSAW has not explored the Federation's attendance and contribution to the WIDF's congress in detail, and its impact on forging international relationships through information exchange. Gladys Smith also attended the COM and recorded how 'delegates crowded around us to get news from South Africa'.[111] The international community were interested in hearing about the South African context and how women were situated with-in it. She also detailed how this event was used to exchange experiences and details of women's struggles– it allowed many meetings to take place between policy makers and civilians– 'big people talk on one side, the little people talk on the other side and the little people are going to win'.[112] Through solidarity, women and political comrades would win justice and freedom for all. This predicted that grassroots movements were going to prevail and echoed the Freedom Charter and strength of civilians. The WIDF appealed to all women from all organisations to take part in the Congress of Mothers.[113] This was a well-received event and, according to Joseph, over 1000 people attended the conference from sixty-five countries,[114] representing approximately sixty-five million women.[115] For the Federation this was important as it demonstrated the WIDF's massive exposure and international influence.

[109] Ibid.
[110] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD 1812, F12, Vol. 38, p. 7,584.
[111] Gladys Smith, 'Coloured Mother in Europe', *New Age* 1 (42) (4 August 1955), p. 2.
[112] Gladys Smith, 'Coloured Mother in Europe', *New Age* 1 (42) (4 August 1955), p. 2.
[113] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, Ey 2, 'Special Information Bulletin WIDF, Berlin May 1955.
[114] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Db2.2 Joseph correspondence to FEDSAW, January 1956.
[115] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae5.3, Report of the World Congress of Mothers.

The need to have women represented and involved in the fight for peace was a clear message in the Congress. A leaflet for this Congress stated 'no people can win freedom while women are kept back.'[116] This identifies and personifies FEDSAW's ethos where women had a distinctive role in helping to liberate the country and securing a better future for their children.

Later on in the pamphlet, there is discussion about a past women's conference that many women had attended however it was unclear if South Africa was present. Despite this it states 'we South African women will meet to add our voices to those of other women in the world, so we can press our opinions and seek solution to the problems of our country and of mothers everywhere.'[117] This demonstrates their inclusive nature of seeing themselves as part of an international environment even if physically they could not be part of the conference or event, but also how South African women were active in solving issues faced in society and the country.

This event was characterised by inclusiveness as there was no political affiliation and no racial or class distinction. Leaflets handed out advertised that 'no women will be debarred',[118] which promoted unity and solidarity, needed for the event. It also illustrated that the WIDF were not concerned with these women's political affiliations or their different political beliefs. Therefore, the WIDF went beyond party politics and focused on equality for all women. The invitation stated 'every woman who has the future of the children of South Africa at heart, is invited to attend this meeting'.[119] By having this approach, the inclusivity of the organisation was evident. It was this unification that was an important characteristic of FEDSAW. Unity of women beyond race, class, and domestic status was evident in the invitation.

Pamphlets and propaganda also had information about the FEDSAW's background and aims. The leaflet's propaganda was clear and concise in that it had strong tag lines emphasizing the collective struggle women were part of and collective action that was needed to address these issues. 'Women's part is vital in

[116] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae 2.1, Circulars announcing the Meeting in Support of the World Congress of Mothers, July 1955, p. 1.
[117] Ibid., p. 2.
[118] Ibid.
[119] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae2.1, Circulars announcing the Meeting in Support of the World Congress of Mothers, July 1955, p. 2.

the struggle',[120] reminding the readers that the struggle was incomplete without women's involvement and perhaps also weaker without their involvement, not only in the physical number of people involved in the movement, but also the lack of diversity of ideas and perspectives.

The pamphlet called for support for mothers and women, whose first concern was their children. 'Motherism' as a theme is important in FEDSAW and was used specifically here to call women's attention to support the World Congress of Mothers. FEDSAW themselves were also proactive in sending information to members about the Congress of Mothers' conference in 1955,[121] as a way of keeping them updated while also feeling included in dialogues, and also reinforcing women's strength and the purpose of the congress. When planning for the Congress of Mothers in 1955, the FEDSAW stated 'our fight is for mothers. The fathers should follow.'[122] This indicated that women's plight was far more extensive and complicated, as they would not have the resources or the political standing to be heard as easily as men. While there was clearly racial discrimination in South Africa, there was also gender discrimination, where women in politics were not taken all that seriously, and their impact was largely ignored. Their roles as mothers meant that they were not economically as active as men. They had domestic roles of looking after households and children, while men were expected to earn a living and were often the main economic actors in households.

The Federation was inspired to replicate the Congress of Mothers in South Africa. A month after the Congress of Mothers took place in Switzerland, the Federation organised a similar congress in the Transvaal province in South Africa. This took place on the 9th of August 1955 at the Trades Hall in Johannesburg with 170 FEDSAW members present,[123] and was an inclusive event where 'no woman would be debarred from attending the congress'.[124] It was held in support of the World Congress of Mothers, where women from all over the world came together to find 'ways to build a happy and peaceful world for all.'[125] True to form, the Federation

[120] Ibid., p. 3.
[121] Francisca de Haan, June Purvis, Margaret Allen and Krassimira Daskalova, *Women's Activism: Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 93.
[122] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae2.5.2, Official reports, 9 August 1955.
[123] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae5.3, report of the Congress of Women.
[124] Ray Alexander, 'Schoeman Bill- Even Worse Than Before', *New Age* 1 (40) (28 July 1955), p. 7.
[125] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae 2.1, Circulars announcing the Meeting in Support of the World Congress of Mothers, July 1955, p. 1.

focused on all South African's rights and used the Freedom Charter as a basis for discussion. The correspondence about this congress ended with 'forward to freedom'[126] indicating that there was an ultimate goal to work together to achieve freedom and a democratic state.

The purpose of this meeting was for South African women to consider how to combine international and national aims to achieve peace by using the Freedom Charter's aims or principles. It was also an appeal for FEDSAW women to join an international movement and for other women in the world to fight for universal equality. The agenda for FEDSAW's meeting confirmed the central role the Freedom Charter played in steering the discussion. This included separate discussions on the freedom of education, the right to choose where to live and the right to occupy land.[127] The last two sessions were dedicated to the international role women played and reported on events such as the World Peace Assembly in Helsinki in June 1955 and the World Congress of Mothers in Switzerland in July 1955, both of which had FEDSAW representatives attend, Baker and Joseph respectively. Therefore, the two Federations were the bridge between the Freedom Charter and Congress of Mothers.

The aim behind the Transvaal Congress of Mothers, was to 'endorse the Freedom Charter'[128] which they interpreted as the will of the South African people. Participants wanted to spread word of a protest they were organising against the Bantu Education Act and wanted to mobilise as many women as possible to protest against this. Their dedication to the Freedom Charter was clear in which the document was described as 'our light'.[129] The charter was their aim for South Africa in fighting against apartheid.

The event was well attended and led by prominent leaders and a newer generation in the Federation. Joseph opened the meeting and Rahima Moosa was the chairwoman for the first session, and there were many speakers for the day representing all the races.[130] There was emphasis on international collaboration through the statement by FEDSAW member Suzan Stephen who reiterated 'in

[126] Ibid.
[127] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae2.2, Agenda for the Transvaal Congress of Mothers, 7 August 1955.
[128] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae5.3, report of the Congress of Women, p. 2.
[129] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae5.2, report of the Congress of Mothers, p. 1.
[130] Ibid.

struggle for freedom, we mustn't lose sight of [our] great objective, which is peace. If we use the right means, we are bound to reach the right goal in the fight for freedom.'[131] There was emphasis that the fight was much larger than apartheid itself, and all counties were intrinsically linked meaning that South Africa would need to fight for freedom, but also fight to gain international freedom. The 'right means' refers to working collaboratively with other organisations and countries to achieve the common goal, which in this case would be world peace.

Speakers at the Transvaal Congress of Mothers used their international experience to motivate the audience and reaffirm that they were supported internationally. Ngoyi, one of the speakers at this event, relayed her experience from Europe. She stated in this congress that the women she met overseas were very supportive of South African women and that South African women 'would stand together shoulder to shoulder with other women of the world for disarmament, and for peace and friendship amongst the nations.'[132] There was willingness from South African women to work together with international women on bigger, global issues.

The significance of the Transvaal Congress of Mothers was that it firstly helped establish the women's movement and secondly endorsed the South African Freedom Charter, thereby bridging the international and national women's organisations. With this, Joseph still emphasised the importance of the international community in fighting against local issues. Joseph stated that problems were shared [133] and could not be solved in isolation. Therefore, the FEDSAW's international links would help them reinstate their role in anti-apartheid activism and fight alongside similar organisations in South Africa and abroad.

Conclusion

Transnationalism was an integral part of the Federation even before it was officially formed. Key individuals such as Palmer, Bernstein and Alexander had strong international links with the WIDF. The Federation and leaders realised the strength of global contacts and networks in fighting against apartheid. These leaders,

[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F12, Vol. 38, Speech by Joseph, July/ September 1955 place unknown, p. 7547.

including Ngoyi and Joseph, did not believe South Africa was isolated from the rest of the world, despite its unique and isolating apartheid policies.

The FEDSAW's transnational component was an integral part of the organisation and formed part of their identity as well as their actions and protests. Making the Federation's aims international from the time of the inaugural conference illustrated just how important it was for the organisation to be part of an international community while fighting against injustices. Included in FEDSAW's extensive list of objectives were aims to fight for world peace and associate with organisations abroad that had similar ambitions. These goals were agreed on and revealed when the organisation began in 1954, demonstrating that this was part of the Federation as soon as it started and was part of their strategic aims. From this perspective, transnationalism was used as a political tool for FEDSAW, and would go on to be used against them in the Treason Trial from 1956 until 1961.

The Federation was open to making transnational connections, not only due to their organisational aims but also due to key individuals who influenced the Federation's direction. Transnationalism is the movement of ideas as well as the movement of people with knowledge and experience. The nature of the organisation drew upon various experiences of its founding members and leaders, who were either born overseas or had experience abroad, as well as having experience of working with diverse political organisations. It was with these points that the Federation created links with new organisations overseas such as the WPC and continued a relationship with the WIDF, which had links with the CPSA and FCWU. These connections were used as an educational tool and were pivotal in information exchange where international audiences would benefit from South African women's experiences and vice versa. Through the WIDF, women in the Federation such as Ngoyi and Tamana travelled abroad and learnt about different political struggles in European and Asian countries, and how women in particular fought against various obstacles advocating for human rights for themselves and future generations. They brought back to South Africa their new knowledge and experiences related to women's struggles and this would go on to give them more confidence and reassurance in fighting against the government. These conferences were excellent places for South African women to network and share their experience of apartheid. As a result, they gained international support from fellow women in other countries.

The transnational element had another important role for the Federation. It helped spread the word internationally of what was happening in South Africa. The Federation sent correspondence and information for bulletins to the WIDF, keeping the international community updated with the South African context. Ngoyi was given the opportunity of speaking at the Congress of Mothers in Switzerland, where she could speak about the apartheid laws from first-hand experience. This was a forum where, grievances and struggles could be heard and, through solidarity, some form of international resolution or agreement could be achieved.

FEDSAW found inspiration from these events and replicated the Congress of Mothers in the Transvaal region a couple of months after the event took place in Switzerland. The Federation wanted to show solidarity with the WIDF, but also felt it was important that on a grassroots level South African women had the opportunity to take part in an event for all women, including mothers who had a place where their political voice could be heard.

FEDSAW were clear in the value they saw in being part of the international community. These conferences were seen as having an important effect on female delegates, 'inspiring them to greater efforts in the struggle for freedom.'[134] The restrictions of the apartheid legislation had a clear impact on the continual attendance of delegates at these conferences. Firstly, black people could not obtain passports, but further legislation in 1955 meant that if delegates were to leave South Africa to attend such a conference, they would be persecuted with lengthy prison sentences on their return.[135]

The FEDSAW constantly refocused on the wider context and issues related to the Cold War, potential atomic warfare and the need to work as a global community to prevent this from occurring. With this said, the Federation also focused on the importance of the national context–fighting for equality for men and women, particularly the non-European community who were the most disadvantaged in the country. They were conscious they were part of an international community, and the Federation would not be able to function effectively if it did not have the moral support of its international allies.

[134] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ba 6.2.1, report of the Transvaal Region of South African Women to the Bureau of the Women's International Democratic Federation, p. 3.
[135] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ba 6.2.1, report of the Transvaal Region of South African Women to the Bureau of the Women's International Democratic Federation, p. 3.

The Federation's transnationalism has not been analysed in detail until now, and illustrates the complexity behind the Federation. It was a women's organisation fighting for human rights and against racial injustices. These aims were strategically achieved through national campaigns and international links, where the Federation fought for racial and gender equality, universal human rights and world peace. As such, the transnational link to FEDSAW is not as clear-cut as one might expect. There were multiple avenues, motivations and aims within the organisation that aligned to other foreign organisations' aims and motivations, as well the broader international context of fighting for human rights and world peace. Ultimately, transnationalism for the Federation was based on ideological similarities with like-minded international organisations, as well as race and class and the shared fight against oppression and discrimination. The FEDSAW's strategic and deliberate international connections proved the Federation was ahead of its time in the 1950s. Unlike the FEDSAW, the Black Sash's transnational links emerged over a longer period of time, in a different context, which will be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: The accidental transnationalists: the Black Sash's contacts and networks

Introduction

Unlike the FEDSAW, which had international connections as a strategic aim, the Black Sash's transnationalism was an unexpected result of their white privilege and their class. Transnationalism was not a strategic priority for the Sash. Instead the Black Sash's global links emerged due to their personal and social connections rather than their political aims and ideology. Daisy Solomon and Marjorie Juta in particular introduced the Sash to key organisations in the international women's movement and were invited to the International Alliance of Women (IAW) conference in July 1957, and to Pankhurst's centenary in 1958, as well as making introductions to key individuals such as IAW's president and vice president, Margery Corbett Ashby and Ezlynn Deraniyagala. Former Black Sash members who moved abroad also played an important role in keeping international links active. For example, Jessie Power moved to London in the mid-1950s, was the key figure who represented the Sash abroad, and attended the IAW conference and other events links to women's organisations.

While individual members were key for the Sash's international networks, religion also connected the Sash to other organisations. Unlike the FEDSAW, which was consciously politically aligned with international organisations with similar ideologies, the Sash's first global link was to a religious body, the Inter-Denominational African Ministers Federation (IDAMF) in June 1957. Foley, described as very religious, was in favour of connecting the Black Sash to this organisation as it aligned with the Sash's Christian ideals.

This was the prelude to the Sash's international connections with other organisations. Thereafter, the Sash broadened its international connections and created links with women's organisations focused specifically on human rights. The largest of these was the IAW, which subsequently led the Sash to advocate against apartheid internationally, while acknowledging women's struggles worldwide.

The Sash were in a privileged position where their status, being middle to upper class, and education meant they moved in elite circles, allowing them the

opportunity to get involved in organisations such as the IAW. With that said, it would have been entirely possible for the Sash to forge influential international links, making a wider, international impact. This did not take place for two main reasons. Firstly, the Sash took pride in being a South African organisation that dealt with South African issues only. They reiterated their purpose was to defend human rights only in South Africa and that were not aligned with any international movement, nor were they interested in doing so. This was made evident in their speeches given abroad, as well as their public response to the Black Stole (Shawl) in Rhodesia, who found inspiration from the Sash. Secondly, the Sash defined themselves as apolitical and were overly cautious of getting involved in any politics, regardless of whether it was national or international. Their commitment to human rights was very much on a local level, specifically aimed towards human rights that were being violated due to apartheid.

Being apolitical, the Sash had an international link to the rest of the world, which was the role of education. Using their race and class privilege, they managed to secure international and national academics as guest speakers to their meetings. These talks helped spread ideas and experiences, exposing Sash members to wider issues while encouraging discussions. Therefore, transnationalism for the Sash was not a political strategy, but rather one focused on education that emerged due to personal links and the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

As with FEDSAW, scholars have focused on the role of Black Sash within South Africa. Scholars such as Rogers and Michelman explored the Black Sash's existence in the first year, focusing specifically on their structure and aims in 1956, while Spink analysed the Black Sash over a broader timescale from the 1950s until 1989. Additionally, Burton's monograph is the most recent publication that integrates archival materials in her analysis of the Sash's history and protests. All of the secondary literature has focused on the details of the organisation and their actions against the apartheid government, looking at their role within the country. However, none of these sources analyse the Sash's transnational links and its contribution to the organisation's functioning. Analysing the Sash from a transnational perspective enables scholars to further understand the organisation's ideological evolution, integration into the national liberation movement and contribution from their international connections.

It is true that the Sash established themselves as being an apolitical organisation that defended the 1910 constitution, and were active in a South African political context. Yet they also had transnational connections in the background. The Sash's transnational links by 1957 demonstrate their evolution and shift from being an isolated organisation, to one that was willing to discuss apartheid openly with an international audience and internationally mobilise support for the anti-apartheid movement.

By highlighting and analysing their transnational perspectives, this chapter brings out another largely unknown side to the Sash. Through this transnational framework, one begins to understand to what extent the Sash were embedded in anti-apartheid activism, and just how well connected the organisation was. It also helps to define who they were, what they stood for, their overall goals and decisions for their methods. The significance of this transnational framework is that it allows themes to emerge that help historians further understand the Sash and start to have an understanding of who they were and where they can be placed in the South African women's movement, shedding light on their ideological development and roles in anti-apartheid activism.

This chapter analyses the emergence of the transnational links within the Sash, and argues that transnationalism was accidental for the Sash. It was an unintentional side effect of their class and privilege, based on members leaving South Africa and staying in touch with the organisation, and networking with prominent leaders such as Solomon and Juta who linked and educated them to issues women experienced in the UK.

The Black Sash supporting transnationalism?

The organisation's membership shaped how the Sash perceived and reacted to their national and international environment. The Black Sash was a hierarchical organisation that consisted of middle to upper class, white women who had resources and means to travel abroad. It was not uncommon for the wealthier members in the Sash to travel to the UK regularly for personal reasons, and to have international friends and colleagues who formed part of international or national organisations. One such member was Solomon, who became well-known in fighting

for 'civil rights and liberties'[1] and was a member of the Black Sash, the SAIRR and the NCW, and was a regular speaker at Sash meetings. The organisation was very proud to have her as a member[2] and in some ways she was a pioneer or celebrity. While she was never part of the Sash's protests, nor very active in the Sash,[3] Solomon represented something bigger. She represented politically active South African white women, standing for equal rights while being the bridge for women in solidarity. Solomon was well connected and one of her close colleagues was Margery Corbett Ashby,[4] a British suffragist who was also president of the IAW from 1923 until 1946 and was Carrie Chapman Catt's successor. These colleagues were interested in what was happening in South Africa and invited Sash members to speak at meetings or conferences[5] abroad. This created opportunities to work at a transnational level by contributing to the Sash's limited international presence, as well as extending their anti-apartheid activism overseas.

With the majority of the Sash members being of English descent, they were often the most privileged amongst the white population. Most of these women had contacts abroad, and could leave South Africa if needed, whereas Afrikaans women and non-white communities did not have the same privilege[6] and had more pressure and urgency to address immediate political and social issues in South Africa. By contrast, the Federation represented all races and was an outlet for non-white and white women to become politically active.

Moreover, as children, future Sash members grew up in an environment where they were privileged and had the opportunity to travel, meet people from other places and learn from their travels. These trips were often as family vacations. Diana Davis, a Port Elizabeth Black Sash member, recounted how she travelled to Australia as a child, and when she was a married woman, she travelled to the USA and Germany often.[7] Similarly, Mary Burton had the opportunity to travel abroad and recalled visiting family in Argentina and speaking about how the NP government labelled liberals as communists and ultimately being left wing.[8] The benefits from travelling abroad were the ability to 'talk to people'[9] and feel 'freedom'[10] in these

[1] Black Sash, 'Personality Parade– Miss Daisy Solomon', *Black Sash Journal* 2 (10) (December 1957), p. 5.
[2] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Black Sash, 'Personality Parade– Miss Daisy Solomon', *Black Sash Journal* 2 (10) (December 1957), p. 5.
[5] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[6] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 155.
[7] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[8] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[9] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.

contexts compared to when they were in South Africa. This shaped her perspective on the South African situation and encouraged her to get involved in South African politics.

Prominent leaders in the Sash all had some kind of experience of travelling or living overseas, exposing them to new ideas, expanding their networks and influencing their approaches and perspectives about South African politics. For example, the Black Sash's first president Ruth Foley completed her college years at the Bedford Physical Training College, in the UK.[11] This had a profound effect on how Foley perceived South Africa's racial policies when she returned from the UK, and encouraged her to become politically active. So much so, that when Foley was spreading the word of creating the Women's Defence of the Constitution League, she converted many women who were not at all interested in politics, to join the League through her sincerity and passion[12] for fighting for justice. Similarly Nell Green, the Sash's vice-chair in 1955, studied in the Netherlands when she was 16, and worked in Java translating work for a large firm, while Noel Robb, an active member of the Cape branch, was born in the UK and studied Chemistry at London University.[13] She moved to South Africa in her early 20s, where she met her husband and then lived in Brazil for a short period of time, which exposed her to different forms of poverty and attitudes to race.[14] This experience showed her how race was treated differently in South Africa compared to the rest of the world, such as Brazil or other countries in South America.[15] Similarly, Green and Robb attended the Sash's first conference in Johannesburg in October 1955,[16] making them the earliest Black Sash members. Most of the women leading the Sash had some kind of international experience– whether it was for education or work– leading them to see women's roles and human rights from a different perspective and reinforcing their stance on morality and justice for fighting for what they saw as right in the South African context.

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[10] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[11] Black Sash, 'Meet the Black Sash: National Executive Who's Who', *Black Sash Journal*, Vol. 1 (3), March 1956, p. 8.
[12] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[13] Black Sash, 'Meet the Black Sash: More Office Bearers of the Cape Western Region', *Black Sash Journal* 2 (1) (February 1957), p. 12.
[14] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p. 30.
[15] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference:, BC 1368 (Cassandra Parker folder), B1.3, Women's vision foundation- biography about Noel Robb, p. 35.
[16] Black Sash, 'Meet the Black Sash: More Office Bearers of the Cape Western Region', *Black Sash Journal* 2 (1) (February 1957), p. 12.

Travelling abroad widened these women's perspectives about what was happening in other countries and reinforced why they were fighting against apartheid. Davis described the sense of liberty she felt when she went abroad: 'I always had a feeling of relief and sort of freedom when I got on the aeroplane.'[17] Even being the most privileged in society during apartheid, the white women in the Black Sash also felt the heaviness and oppression apartheid enforced on South African society, even though they did not directly experience it.

While these women had class and privilege in common, some members came from a similar political background and experience as the Torch Commando, predecessor of the Springbok Legion. Earlier Sash women were involved in the Torch Commando, and were in service during World War Two in Europe or South Africa,[18] which galvanised them to get involved in fighting against apartheid and resisting removing coloured people from the Voters' Roll. This included prominent members such as Jean Sinclair. While not all members and leaders had the experience of living or travelling abroad, Black Sash members were well read and had knowledge of local and international affairs. This was further enhanced through holding lectures and seminars for members.

The Sash's transnational focus was not politically motivated, but rather expressed through their commitment to educating organisation members. Black Sash members were well networked and well versed at organising events and discussions with academics as guest speakers from South African and international universities. The Sash believed education was the main vehicle for their aim that ensured 'restoration and encouragement of political morality'.[19] Lectures or seminars were held to try to influence white voters with panel discussions[20] while educating them about discrimination in the country and events abroad. Therefore, it became an 'academic learning experience'[21] for members where women were exposed to a wider debate about apartheid and human rights, the latter promoting the Sash's cause. One such guest who was invited to speak was Head Master of Eton, Robert Birley,[22] an anti-apartheid campaigner in his own right. Birley, who was a visiting professor in Education at the University of Witwatersrand in the 1960s, spoke at a

[17] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[18] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[19] Black Sash, 'Introducing our Group', *Black Sash Journal* 1 (1) (January 1956), p. 1.
[20] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice*, p. 37.
[21] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[22] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.

Black Sash meeting about justice.[23] The Sash also took Birley to speak at schools about fairness,[24] so the younger generation could get international exposure about human rights and justice. These talks, much like the earlier women's movement of the WCTU, were used as tools to exchange ideas and experiences in different countries. These became events where members were expanding their networks and knowledge base about what was happening internationally, as well as promoting discussion and sharing ideas.

It was also important for the Black Sash to form links with individuals in national academic institutions. The Sash would formally declare male supporters as 'associate members' of the Black Sash. One such associate was historian Professor Rodney Davenport[25] from Rhodes University. This title meant these members were formally recognised as supporting the organisation, and would be sent literature about the Sash.[26] Strategically, this enabled the Sash to gain support beyond white women, while also maintaining links with individuals in various academic institutions.

The Sash had significantly more income than the FEDSAW. They received their funding from donations, subscriptions to their magazines, membership fees, and Mirabel Rogers's book about the Sash's first year. Donations, in particular, played an important role in the Sash's funding. Treasury reports were only drawn up from 1960 onwards, although there were financial notes documented in their national conference reports. From 1955 until 1958, donors' details were absent, however what has been documented are the amounts that were given. In 1955 and 1956, £1807.60 was donated to the organisation compared to the FEDSAW which had a total of £175.99 donated to the Federation. By 1958, the Black Sash's donations dropped to £170,[27] compared to the FEDSAW's £124.77.[28] The Black Sash's middle to upper class connections benefitted the organisation financially, further emphasising their white privilege. By 1960, the organisation started documenting who donated money to the Sash in treasury reports. In April 1960, Lt. Col. Sanders and Mrs Anderson, both from the UK, donated £5; while in May 1960, the Sash received a £3.15 donation from the USA.[29] By 1961, the 'Society of Friends' from the

[23] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Interview with Elizabeth Davenport, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[26] Ibid.
[27] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, D4, Special National Conference, 31 March 1958.
[28] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ag1.1. FEDSAW's finances, p. 9.
[29] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, D7, National Conference, May 1960.

UK donated £15 to the Sash.[30] It was unclear what exactly the relationship was between the Black Sash and these organisations, however many Sash members moved to the UK and the donations could have been from past members.

The Black Sash's international connections were not created due to political similarities or for political gain, but rather had the additional benefit of financial support. Financial donors described themselves as the Black Sash's 'international family'[31] and came from countries such as Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Aden and China.[32] These individuals donated to the Sash without having become members or being part of the South African political context, and supported the organisation for 'striving for goodwill and racial harmony'.[33] There were of course also international donors who were Sash members who had moved abroad after living in South Africa and joining the organisation. Sash members also had international connections and networks, which could explain the significant amount of money that entered the organisation via sponsors overseas.

Organisations also played an important role in donating money to the Sash. The national conferences, especially that in April 1956, were funded by organisations based in Portugal and the UK.[34] Additionally, Davenport recalled that the Black Sash received a lot of money from Norwegian Christian organisations in the 1960s.[35] Unfortunately, this was not formally documented in the minutes or archives, and the origins and connections with specific organisations in these countries are unknown.

The Sash's donations were substantial when the organisation was first established, compared to the late 1950s. This does not signify that there was a lack of support, but rather demonstrates the organisation's lack of momentum by 1960 due to the volatile political context in South Africa through the Sharpeville Massacre and Treason Trial. These events increased international support for the militant branch of the ANC, uMkhonto weSizwe (MK), translated as 'Spear of the Nation', but had an adverse effect on organisations such as the Sash who were not entrenched in the national liberation movement.

While religion was not a membership criterion, one of the contradictions with the organisation was how its aims set it to be nondenominational; when in reality it

[30] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C3, Treasurers Circular, 1 June 1961.
[31] Black Sash, 'International Family" sends a Donation', *Black Sash Journal*, 5 (1), (December 1960), p. 29.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Michelman, *The Black Sash of South Africa*, p. 58.
[35] Interview with Elizabeth Davenport, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.

was influenced by religion. The majority of members in the Black Sash in 1955 were 'staunch Christians'[36] and claimed, 'we are Christian ladies that often start our meetings with prayer'.[37] There were few instances where Foley formally referred to religion, however she referred to Christianity in the Black Sash journal, where she mentioned that rational thinking and sanctity were vital to overcoming apartheid, and that sanctity is 'the basis for the teaching of Christianity'.[38] She also ended her article with a prayer, something that was evident in some of the Black Sash journals, praying for 'clarity of judgement, courage in decision, and power to perform what we know to be our duty'[39] and most of the journals ended in prayers saying 'So help us God in Whose strength we trust'.[40] Burton recalled that there were debates in the organisation about the ending of the Sash's dedication, which ended in 'so help us God' as many members felt it deterred women from joining the Sash.[41] Therefore a shift started taking place from the early days of the Sash, where the religious- faith element was used in some ways to encourage women to join the organisation, to removing the Christian element, so all women felt welcome regardless of their faith.

Religion and faith were an important foundation for the Sash in its early years, and formed a bridge between South African women's organisations and the wider international women's community. The Sash was indirectly related to the WCTU women's temperance organisation, the first women's organisation in South Africa that was based on and maintained an international network. Both organisations were built on Christian principles, where the Black Sash believed in fighting for just causes such as abolishing racial discrimination, while the WCTU fought against discrimination and the negative effects of alcohol on the wellbeing of communities.

Scholars Spink and Burton have underplayed the importance of religion in the organisation, which becomes more apparent through archival sources and interviews with Black Sash members.[42] Christianity linked the Sash to specific facets of the transnational movement through individuals and other organisations. The Sash had close ties with the Dean of the Cathedral in Grahamstown in South Africa Roy Barker, and his wife Margaret, who were originally from England. Margaret was very

[36] Interview with Elizabeth Davenport, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[37] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p. 19.
[38] Foley, 'The Real Tragedy of South Africa', *Black Sash Journal* 3 (15) (February 1959), p. 13.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Black Sash, 'First Things First, *Black Sash Journal* 1 (4) (April 1956), p. 2.
[41] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[42] Spink, *Black Sash: The Beginning of a Bridge in South Africa*, p. 32; Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice*, p. 37.

religious and was a 'staunch member'[43] of the Black Sash. The majority, if not all, of the Sash members in Grahamstown were Christian, and religion played a fundamental part in the organisation.[44] This not only created the trajectory of the Sash's direction, but also formed bonds with other organisations and formed solidarity within the community.

Under Ruth Foley's leadership, religion was used as a transnational bridge and shaped the Sash's conservative character in its early years where its meetings, pamphlets and dedication often included prayers; attempts to align with other religious organisations ceased as the Sash was seen as being too politically active through organising protests against apartheid. From those who knew her, Foley was described as a very Christian woman.[45] This was made clear in correspondence from the Seven Day Adventists who declined to take part in the Sash's November 1955 protest against the Senate Bill and stated 'as a church with international affiliation… we subscribe to the ideals of Christian brotherhood amongst nations. As a direct result of this, we do not participate in politics of any nature, under any government'.[46] This kind of response inadvertently shaped the Sash's identity and where they fit within religious organisations and the wider national liberation movement. The organisation was too liberal and political to gain support from religious organisations, and was too conservative and not political enough to fit in the wider anti-apartheid movement.

The Black Sash's transnational engagements: human rights and religion

In 1955, the Sash found inspiration from the UK suffragettes through their protests demanding female suffrage. Sinclair recommended the Sash take part in radical and more militant acts of protest such as throwing firecrackers in post boxes[47] as a way of protesting against the government while also promoting the Sash and its role in the political context. The organisation refused this as an activity that they felt was too aggressive, and as a result decided on creating a protest style that was passive in the form of hauntings that involved no movement or noise.

[43] Interview with Elizabeth Davenport, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[46] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Johannesburg, Reference: AE862, J.1.1.1, Correspondence to the Black Sash from the Seven Day Adventists, 9 November 1955.
[47] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.

Two years later, an opportunity arose for the Sash to network with the IAW. The alliance was created in 1902 by American suffragists, and was known as the IWSA, with the aim to achieve equal political and social rights for women.[48] While this organisation contributed to the first wave of feminism through fighting for universal suffrage, the IAW also created an international network of multiple countries and prominent activists all over the world.

One activist who was part of this network was Solomon, who had close ties with the IAW and other international organisations. Solomon connected the Sash and the international platform fighting for women's rights as she introduced the Black Sash to the IAW, when she sent the Black Sash publication to Margery Corbett Ashby,[49] suffragist and IWSA president.

The possibility of attending the IAW conference was first discussed in a Black Sash meeting in June 1957, where President Foley circulated an IAW pamphlet. It was also agreed in this meeting that the Sash would subscribe to the IAW's journal, *International Women's News*.[50] Therefore, the organisation would keep updated on the progress of the international women's movement. During this period, the Sash was only subscribed to SAIRR[51] to keep up to date with South African news on politics and apartheid. Not being subscribed to other women's publications validates the Sash's limited interest in what was happening in international women's organisations; they did not see themselves as a feminist organisation or a women's political organisation.

This meeting also highlighted the importance of the Sash uniting to create a clear message about the Sash's stance on politics. It was agreed that Foley, Green and Sinclair would create an address for Power to present at the conference, being very clear that 'the scope of our movement was much narrower than that of the IAW'. [52] Again the organisation wanted to clarify the ideological and physical boundaries in which they worked, and that it was a much more localised movement focusing only on South Africa, rather than having wider international membership and aims, compared to the IAW. This quote also raises an interesting perspective of

[48] International Alliance of Women, 'Declaration of Principles', http://womenalliance.org/old/declare.html, accessed 10 July 2017.
[49] Black Sash, 'Personality Parade: Miss Dairy Solomon', *Black Sash Journal*, 2 (10) (December 1957), p. 5.
[50] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C., Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes, 24 June 1957.
[51] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1. Black Sash, National Conference, 1958.
[52] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes, 24 June 1957.

how the Sash saw themselves. This was the first time they used the term 'movement', signifying they were starting to see themselves beyond an organisation and creating their own following in the wider South African movement. The anti-apartheid movement was a significantly larger, older and a more complex undertaking, which leads to the assumption that the Sash was not referring to the anti-apartheid movement but rather themselves and their isolated campaigns. Having said this, the Sash slowly became more involved in collaborations with other parties from 1957 onwards, and saw themselves actively fighting alongside other organisations with the creation of CATAPAW and taking part in multi-political and multiracial conferences.

Solomon was not the sole reason the Sash was invited to the conference in Geneva. Other Sash members such as Juta played an important role in reinforcing these international networks. At the beginning of July 1957, the IAW's Vice-President, Ezlynn Deraniyagala, was in conversation with Juta from the Sash in Ascot, UK, concerning the aims and objectives of the organisation.[53] Deraniyagala had a specific interest in the Sash as it resonated with the racial and ethnic conflicts in her home country, Ceylon. Deraniyagala wanted to understand how the Black Sash were structured and how they functioned, so she could compare this to the conflict and potential solutions between the Tamils and Sinhalese.[54] Through their discussion, Deraniyagala requested the Sash be invited to the Board of International Alliance and the Presidents of our Affiliated Societies, which were scheduled to take place in Geneva from 24 until 29 July 1957.[55] Furthermore, Juta stated in correspondence to Foley, that she met Deraniyagala while involved in the Festival of Women in Wembley in the UK, where Juta publicly spoke about women's affairs in South Africa.[56] According to Juta, Deraniyagala heard about the Sash from Corbett Ashley, who had recently read Mirabel Rogers' book about the Sash[57] and who according to archival sources, was in contact with Solomon about the Black Sash.[58] Between reading the literature that was published about the Sash and discussing the

[53] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes– letter from Ester Graff to Ruth Foley, 10 July 1957.
[54] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes– letter from Marjorie Juta to Ruth Foley, 10 July 1957.
[55] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes– letter from Ester Graff to Ruth Foley, 10 July 1957.
[56] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes– letter from Marjorie Juta to Ruth Foley, 10 July 1957.
[57] Ibid.
[58] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes– letter from Marjorie Juta to Ruth Foley, 10 July 1957.

organisation with IAW members such as Juta and Solomon, the word about the Sash started to spread internationally.

Ester Graff, president of the IAW, also took an interest in the Black Sash. These networks helped further spread the Black Sash's international influence and contacts. Both Deraniyagala and Graff were well-networked individuals, who would have been able to further catapult the Sash's international activities and influence. Deraniyagala, described as a 'well networked' woman, was 'well known in international circles'[59] while Graff was described as a 'feminist and a champion of women's rights'.[60] Both women were focused on women's rights and equality, the latter, which resonated with the Sash. It was clear the Sash were not and did not aim to be feminists[61], and this is something they did not have in common with Graff. The Sash instead focused on broader human rights for both men and women, which could have separated them from the IAW and similar organisations' feminist stance.

The IAW were eager for the Sash to send a proxy in Foley's place, and preferred they sent someone from Europe.[62] The organisation had 'many Black Sash women overseas'[63] so it was not in the Sash's best interests to send someone from South Africa. Juta suggested Green attend this conference, however if she was unable to attend another member should be put forward.[64] The Sash had a high regard for Green and Power; both were proactive and had been Sash members since its inception. Unlike Green, Power was living in London at the time[65] and was selected to attend the conference on the organisation's behalf. It was this gesture that led to Jessie Power being invited to attend the International Alliance of Women's conference in Geneva in July 1957.[66]

Like the Federation's experience of transnationalism, this event enabled information exchange between organisations and further promoted transnationalism. The conference was an opportunity to further network with women from other countries from different political environments. This conference was described as a

[59] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes– letter from Marjorie Juta to Ruth Foley, 10 July 1957.
[60] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes, Letter from Power about the IAW conference, 25 September 1957.
[61] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[62] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes– letter from Ester Graff to Ruth Foley, 10 July 1957.
[63] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes, 17 July 1957.
[64] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes– letter from Marjorie Juta to Ruth Foley, 10 July 1957
[65] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes, 24 June 1957.
[66] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice*, p. 55.

place where women could get together and 'exchange views and experiences with other women leaders from all parts of the world'.[67] There were an estimated 35 countries that would be represented at the conference,[68] which would be excellent exposure for the Sash– so Juta highly recommended they attend and make themselves visible.

The IAW were associated with other organisations, which helped the Black Sash further network with organisations they would normally not have access to. The IAW conference was associated with the Swiss organisation, Association Suisse Pour le Suffrage Feminine (ASSF), where the fight for women's votes was still prevalent. It is unclear whether the Black Sash were invited as a women's organisation or an organisation focused on human rights, however when Power arrived at the conference, she educated the audience about the reality of the harsh apartheid legislation in South Africa, and the opposition working against it.[69] The audience believed that all white people supported and accepted apartheid,[70] as such, the Sash must have seemed like a radical and progressive group to a foreign audience.

The Black Sash's presence at this conference was important for two reasons. Firstly, it educated the international audience, including the press, about opposition to apartheid from within the country. Power stated there was little recognition or knowledge by the English press about opposition parties in South Africa.[71] This signifies that through the Sash's financial privilege of travelling abroad and speaking about the organisation, they also brought a wider awareness and exposure to anti-apartheid activism and the national liberation movement.

Secondly, Power portrayed the Black Sash as a learning tool of the power of women in fighting adversity. She reiterated that women were most powerful in society, and were capable of fighting for what they believed in, especially as a united front.[72] Instead of discussing women's votes, which Switzerland would only get in 1971, Power focused on the strength and influence of women in a political and social sphere. She attended the conference as an observer and principal speaker at the

[67] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes– letter from Ester Graff to Ruth Foley, 10 July 1957.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Black Sash, 'Conference of the International Alliance of Women- Geneva, July 1957', *Black Sash Journal* (2) (8) (September 1957), p. 10.
[70] Ibid., p. 11.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Black Sash, 'Conference of the International Alliance of Women– Geneva, July 1957', *Black Sash Journal* (2) (8) (September 1957), p. 10.

reception,[73] and was told the Sash was the 'highlight' and 'inspiration' at the conference.[74] Her speech was met with a 'chorus of acclamation and approbation for the brave women of South Africa.'[75] Power also used this conference as an opportunity to distribute all the Black Sash propaganda she had with her while in Geneva, which Graff would go on to take to other engagements already scheduled.

The conference served its purpose of opening a dialogue for women around the world and creating potential collaborations between the Sash and IAW. Towards the end of the conference, a closer alliance between the Black Sash and the IAW was discussed.[76] A letter Power wrote to fellow Sash member Noel Robb further supported this. In this letter, Power discussed how the conference opened up the opportunity for more invitations to other events and speaking engagements with organisations such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom,[77] as well as the Westminster branch of the Liberal Association in November and December 1957; and the League of Women Citizens in early 1958.[78] Power also received invitations to speak in Stockholm, London, Lancashire and Athens[79] and had three articles to write for international publications.[80] It is unlikely anything emerged from meeting with these organisations, as there are no detailed records of these meetings or Power's reports in the Sash archives. Despite this, the IAW created an opportunity for the Black Sash to become transnational in nature and Power became an international representative for the Sash, based in London, should the Sash have decided to pursue a transnational approach.

The Sash's presence at the IAW conference sparked international interest from key members of the international women's movement. Graff promoted the Sash at the Danish affiliation of the women's organisation, stating their aims in South Africa.[81] This led to more interest and questions about the organisation, which Graff could not answer, but the Danish group wanted to be kept informed on the Sash's

[73] Black Sash, 'Conference of the International Alliance of Women– Geneva, July 1957', *Black Sash Journal* (2) (8) (September 1957), p. 10.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Black Sash, 'Conference of the International Alliance of Women– Geneva, July 1957', *Black Sash Journal* (2) (8) (September 1957), p. 11.
[76] Ibid.
[77] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: Cape West Letters, November 1957, p. 3.
[78] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes, Letter from Power about the IAW conference, 25 September 1957.
[79] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: Cape West Letters, September 1957, p. 2.
[80] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p. 30.
[81] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes, 25 September 1957.

activities, results of these activities and the future direction of the organisation.[82] The audience wanted to learn how women in South Africa were organising themselves against apartheid and 'more people want to hear more about it'.[83] This illustrates a gap in the South African women's movement abroad and how the international community were responding with interest to women's organisations such as the Black Sash in a politically tense setting.

Furthermore, the Sash's uniqueness as white women fighting against apartheid was captivating for an international audience, resulting in key figures wanting to be kept up to date on the organisation's growth and South Africa's political development. This enabled the Black Sash to publish articles internationally and send their own pamphlets abroad. Graff requested that copies of the most up to date Sash magazine be sent to England,[84] while the Black Sash also published materials overseas through bodies such as 'World Goodwill'[85] linked to the UN. There was clearly an interest from the international community about the Sash and writing articles or publications was a powerful educational tool for promotion and exposure.

The IAW had followers around the world, and while they did not have a branch in South Africa, they had valuable contacts, specifically in Johannesburg. Graff stated that the IAW would send minutes from their last meeting, and if the letter did not arrive, the Sash should contact 'devoted friends' of the IAW based in Johannesburg, one of whom was specifically mentioned as Daisy Solomon.[86] Other devoted friends included Bertha Solomon (UP member of parliament) and the Consulate General of Israel.[87] While the IAW were not active in South Africa, they had a handful of personal and professional contacts such as Daisy Solomon, who had worked with various international organisations in the past. Describing these women as 'devoted' demonstrates their loyalty to each other's cause and commitment to gender equality but also their past contribution in fighting for equality.

Strategically, the relationship for both the IAW and the Black Sash was two-fold and they would both benefit. The Black Sash benefitted from having an

[82] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes, 25 September 1957.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: Cape West letters, September 1957, p. 1.
[86] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes– letter from Ester Graff to Ruth Foley, 10 July 1957.
[87] Ibid.

international stage to showcase their organisation and contribute to discussions about women's empowerment, while educating international organisations about South African women's struggles. The IAW also benefitted from this relationship, as they wanted to extend their influence in Africa, however they were focused on getting women's votes.[88] The latter was problematic, as the women's movement on the African continent was not moving in the same direction nor at the same rate as their European counterparts, due to South Africa's specific political and racial setting. In South Africa, the local women's movement was responding to legalised racism, a pressing issue that was a priority over women's votes, something European countries could not relate to or understand.

Unfortunately, South Africa was not ready for women to take a political stance against apartheid internationally and as a result, the Sash were humiliated by the South African press. The aftermath of the Black Sash's attendance at the IAW conference resulted in insults from the South African press. The *Transvaler* newspaper reported the Sash 'washed our dirty linen'[89] at the IAW conference, implying the Sash disrespected South Africa's reputation abroad by discussing apartheid. The organisation, specifically Green, drafted a reply to this article, and claimed they were in opposition to the government and by attending and demonstrating their opposition they had indeed aired dirty laundry![90] In addition to this, the organisation clarified what exactly Power had spoken about, which was specifically women's roles in South Africa and how they fought for what they believed in, therefore they had not directly or intentionally criticised the government.[91] Power spoke about how the Sash was an example of what women could do if they organised themselves to fight for what they believed in.[92] The Sash felt obligated to defend themselves as they took pride in their self-proclaimed apolitical stance and did not use their international presence as a political forum, even though they actively protested against apartheid and were in fact politicised, whether they wanted to acknowledge it or not.

[88] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes– letter from Ester Graff to Ruth Foley, 10 July 1957.
[89] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes, 11 September 1957.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Black Sash, 'Conference of the International Alliance of Women– Geneva, July 1957', *Black Sash Journal* (2) (8) (September 1957), p. 11.

One such political organisation was the IDAMF, which aimed to fight against discriminatory laws as well as extending citizenship to all South Africans regardless of race.[93] The IDAMF were organising a multiracial conference in December 1957, to discuss potential resolutions to these issues, and wrote to the Sash to ask for a potential sponsor, who would assist in discussing and planning the agenda.[94] Foley wanted to act as a sponsor for this event, and was asked to send her response immediately in June 1957 so the international branches in America could start organising the event. Foley suggested the sponsor list be widened, to which the IDAMF agreed, and she suggested that regional chairwomen such as Sinclair also sign up as sponsors.[95] The Sash were interested in being part of this conference, and were introduced to it via a more liberal religious group that were not as averse to being politically active. Perhaps if the Sash had been approached by any other political organisation, they would have declined the offer to be part of this conference, just as they had declined offers of collaborations in the past. Regardless of the manner in which they became part of the wider national struggle, their involvement in this conference was significant as it demonstrated a move toward more transnational and collaborative events that were to follow, along with a more open attitude by the Sash. The IDAMF's plan for a multiracial, collaborative conference was the first correspondence and organisation that the Sash agreed to work with. This prompted a chain of transnational events that the Sash would be part of, most of which took place in 1957 and 1958.

Publicity about the multiracial conference started six months before the event to appeal to all South Africans regardless of their race, political affiliation or background. The *Sunday Times* published a story on this on 30 June 1957, so it would be released at the same time as the 'Pacific Coast network' in the USA.[96] The conference was publicised in the *Sunday Times* and *Dagbreek*[97] signifying it was published to both English and Afrikaans communities, focusing on the white population. Half a year of planning and correspondence meant the conference would

[93] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, Central Executive Committee, C1, Minutes from the Central Executive committee, 24 June 1957.
[94] Ibid.
[95] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, Central Executive Committee, C1, Minutes from the Central Executive committee, 1 July 1957.
[96] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, Central Executive Committee, C1, Minutes from the Central Executive committee, 24 June 1957.
[97] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, Central Executive Committee, C1, Minutes from the Central Executive committee, 1 July 1957.

be as diverse as possible, not just representing political organisations, but also regional and welfare establishments.

This multiracial conference was an opportunity for the Sash to work with international and national organisations. The initial list of sponsors included Yusuf Dadoo (from the SACP and SAIC), Albert Luthuli (ANC), Leo Marquard (SAIRR), Alex Hepple (South African Labour Party) and Alan Paton (Civil Rights League).[98] In addition to these organisations, local associations in attendance included various church organisations, trade unions and the Salvation Army.[99] While it was reported that both men and women attended the conference, there was no mention of the Sash or the FEDSAW attending the event,[100] although they were invited to attend. Women were welcome to take part in the conference but did not lead any of the discussions. Despite this, there is evidence that there was correspondence between the Sash and oppositional organisations, illustrating that religion linked the Black Sash to other international organisations.

The conference helped direct the Black Sash's ideological focus on human rights. The findings from the conference reiterated the importance of fighting for human rights and civil rights in South Africa, including universal adult suffrage.[101] No one from the Sash spoke at this conference[102], and they were not an active part of the processions. Organisations, nonetheless, were encouraged to attend as individuals rather than representing political parties.[103] A COD delegate stated 'a proper reading of the South African situation calls for co-operation and interdependence between various races comprising the South African nation.'[104] This demonstrates the primacy of race, whereas gender and class were secondary issues during apartheid.

These multiracial conferences helped the Black Sash network and encouraged links with international organisations such as the IDAMF. These relationships helped the Sash hone their ideological stance and develop their role in anti-apartheid activism, which they would go on to speak about at international events. It was also through religious organisations that the Sash's transnational political ambitions emerged.

[98] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: A3393, E1, Unpublished materials, 1982, p. 2.
[99] New Age, 'Votes for All the Only Solution: Multiracial Conferences Decides', *New Age* 4 (8) (12 December 1957), p. 1.
[100] New Age, 'Report on the Multiracial Conferences', *New Age* 4 (8) (12 December 1957), p. 5.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., p. 1.
[104] Ibid., p. 5.

After the IAW's conference in 1957, the Black Sash continued attending events abroad. The Sash and the NCW Cape branch were invited to attend Emmeline Pankhurst's centenary in London on 4 July 1958. Sash members who attended were Power, fellow Black Sash member Anna Marias and Juta, who attended talks held at the UK Parliament's House of Commons focused on women in politics; and thereafter placed flowers at Pankhurst's statue in Victoria Tower gardens in London.[105] These were the same women who initiated and attended the IAW's conference in Geneva, demonstrating that Sash members overseas moved in the same socio-political circles and became part of a small, exclusive group of women.

This event was excellent for networking with influential people including UK politicians. Power, Marais and Juta met and discussed the South African context with Pankhurst's niece Enid Goulden Back, as well as Members of Parliament: Frances Davidson, Dame Irene Ward and Nancy Astor from the Conservative Party; Mrs Jean Mann and Dr Edith Summerskill from the Labour Party.[106] This was an opportunity for the Sash and other women to discuss how Pankhurst impacted and influenced attendees and movements in other countries.[107] This event was linked to the first wave of feminism, focused specifically on how women fought for suffrage. While the Black Sash and the NCW in South Africa were not focused on the first wave of feminism and women's votes, they attended these events in international solidarity to fight for human rights. By attending the centenary, the Sash members also acknowledged activists and organisations in the earlier South African women's movement that focused on women's suffrage such as the WEL.

Transnationalism had the effect of shifting the Sash toward universal human rights and anti-apartheid activism. From 1958 onwards, the Sash started to see the benefits of attending international events and how it encouraged international and national collaborations, further helping their cause. The Sash intended to take part in more international events, however this did not always materialise. The Sash decided to join the World Day of Protest on the 10th December 1958, with other organisations such as the Civil Rights League, the NCW and the Church Council.[108] The regional committee decided on their attendance, and there was a focus on

[105] Anna Marais, 'Emmeline Pankhurst Centenary 1858-1958', *Black Sash Journal*, 3 (10) (September 1958), p. 5.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes, 15 January 1958.

human rights, as the proposed programme had a discussion linked to human rights.[109] This was difficult to organise regionally which led to the Sash not taking part in it, however it reiterated the Sash's commitment to human rights and reinforced that this would be part of the organisation's constitutional aims.

Additionally, their international presence helped reinstate their purpose as a pressure group in South Africa. The Sash believed they were the organisation that would be an example for the world about how to create a harmonious multiracial society.[110] They represented the white population who were against apartheid, as well as women, who according to traditional stereotypes were the most vulnerable in society. This meant the organisation was well received abroad and their experience and insights into apartheid and women's roles against it, was welcome. They also saw themselves as 'reality checking the situation in South Africa'.[111] This was demonstrated in 1959 when the International Nursing Association were advised that the South African government had created new legislation that benefitted non-white nurses and improved their conditions, which was not true. This situation caused debates within the Black Sash about what actions the organisation should take.

In these deliberations, there were debates about the Sash extending their protests overseas. One member suggested the Sash protest against Dr Donges, the Minister of Finance, in London,[112] however the organisation unanimously agreed that they should keep their protests in the country and it was stated that this would go against the organisation's policy from 1955.[113] The policies that were being referred to were the aims that the Sash adhered to in 1955, which were to observe the 'principles of the parliamentary democracy within the Union of South Africa.'[114] By taking their protest out of the country, they would be directly violating their own constitution by becoming political, and were changing the nature of the organisation.

From these discussions one can observe the divided attitude to how the Sash should approach and interact with international organisations. A majority of the members believed they should not judge or antagonise international organisations[115]

[109] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Black Sash, Central Executive Meeting Minutes, 15 January 1958.
[110] Stanley Uys, 'The Black Sash makes up its mind on Poverty and Politics', *Sunday Times,* 26 October 1958.
[111] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, Black Sash, National Conference, 2 November 1959.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, A1. Women's Defence of the Constitution League, 1955.
[115] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1. Black Sash, National Conference, 2 November 1959.

based on their actions or advice given. So while trying to be tolerant of other organisations, they also resisted creating formal alliances with organisations.

The Sash inspired other women's organisations on the African continent. One in particular was the 'Black Stole (Shawl)' in Southern Rhodesia, where women protested in the same style with silent hauntings.[116] This came to the Sash's attention in March 1959 in the central executive committee, where regional committees were asked to have discussions about the Black Stole and what should be said in a press statement about it.[117] Despite having similar aims and symbols, Black Sash national president from 1959 until 1960 Molly Petersen decided to highlight the individuality and sovereign roles of both organisations in their home countries in the press statement.[118] In doing so, the Sash emphasised their uniqueness in South Africa and emphasised it would not be replicated elsewhere. Petersen's comments were contested by Mrs Birt, a central executive committee member, who warned that the Sash should be conscious of not losing sight that the organisation might need to collaborate with others in the future,[119] therefore the press statement should not be too harsh or off-putting for other organisations that might be able to join or work alongside the Sash.

As such, the Black Sash clearly stated that they had no part or role in the Black Stole, and the Sash was a specifically South African 'movement' whose membership was only for South African women.[120] This article demonstrates two things. Firstly, the Black Sash mentioned again that they were a 'movement', implying they created a common theme or thought that influenced many organisations and individuals. This had already been mentioned in 1957 while at the IAW's conference. The Sash only referred to themselves as a movement when they were invited to speak or be represented internationally. Secondly, the statement that membership was strictly for South African women, was contradictory because while this was the Black Sash's strict rule, the organisation accepted funding from individuals and organisations overseas regardless of citizenship. In relation to any political protests or political issues, they were an exclusively South African

[116] Black Sash, 'The Black Sash Idea Spreads', *Black Sash Journal*, 3 (17) (April 1959), p. 11.
[117] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archives, Reference: AE862, C1, Committee Executive committee,' Minutes of meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Black Sash held at Estella House, Claremont, 23 March 1959.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Black Sash, 'The Black Sash Idea Spreads', *Black Sash Journal*, 3 (17) (April 1959), p. 11.

organisation, however when it came to funding, they were an all-inclusive organisation.

One month after the story about the Black Stole was published in the Black Sash journal, the organisation responded to misunderstandings and concerns about their role overseas. The Sash reiterated to their readership that they were an exclusively South African organisation who were in 'no way associated with any protest movements or demonstrations outside the borders of South Africa.'[121] This explains how the Sash functioned in isolation and was not interested in taking part in transnational activities or international collaboration.

Despite this, the Sash were flattered to be were seen as role models internationally, especially for their morals and values. They stated the 'Black Sash movement has always based its stand on moral principles.'[122] However what is striking in this article is that the Sash constantly wrote they were a South African only movement, focused on South African issues, and an organisation that only consisted of South African women who could vote. Yet, nothing else was written about the South African context. There was no mention of working with other like-minded South African organisations, which makes one question the validity of using the word 'movement' when discussing the Black Sash. Their movement was an isolated journey consisting of one organisation, rather than a wider movement consisting of multiple organisations and actors.

This article clarified how to place and interpret the Sash internationally. They continually highlighted their South African focus, but this is telling about how they interpreted the international environment. They did not mention anything about being linked to international organisations but by discussing their active role in a South African movement,[123] they were adhering to physical and ideological borders and in some sense were anti-transnationalists when dealing with their aims and objectives in a South African context. It was only by the 1960s, where the Sash formally adopted the UDHR, that they seemed to be more flexible to working with international organisations in achieving broader aims of human rights.

[121] Black Sash, 'The Black Sash is Purely South African, *Black Sash Journal*, 3 (18) (May 1959), p. 5.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.

Observations from abroad: International press and opinions

The Black Sash's protests were published in the international press. The Sash created an international reputation through events that came with their personal contacts where they were given the opportunity to speak at other organisations' events and network; as well as through the international press. The Sash were observed internationally and their roles and actions were published in different parts of the world. On the 19th of November 1955, the *Edinburgh Scotsman* reported the Black Sash made Ministers uncomfortable with the hauntings and it was worrying for them,[124] while on the 19th of November 1955 the *London Economist* linked the Sash's silent protests to Gandhi's passive resistance movement,[125] challenging their unique protests and making a comparison to a much wider movement. Their protest style was further analysed in the Italian press. The *Gazetta del Mezzogiorno* of Bari, Italy published an article about the Sash in the South African context, including the protest style and hauntings of the Sash.[126] This form of protest was understood as being unusual, but also that within the Italian context, the women would be hushed away,[127] rather than being left to protest. Therefore, European countries were watching the Black Sash's progress[128] and observing how organisations such as the Sash were protesting against apartheid. The organisation was described by the South African media as 'making history in a quiet solemn way and not without effect.'[129] This aptly describes how both international and national audiences perceived the organisation. They were passive, but bold to protest against apartheid in a silent fashion, which was in some ways more threatening, so much so that it unnerved South African politicians who had to literally face the Sash's demonstrations on their way to work or at events.

While the Sash were focused on the ideas circulating in the country, their readership spanned several continents, with readers occasionally writing to the magazine discussing the impact of their work. A letter written by Mrs Groom, the then Mayoress of Brisbane, Australia, who was also a member of the Queensland Women's Electoral League, highlighted why the Black Sash were seen as role

[124] Rogers, *The Black Sash: South African's Fight for Democracy,* p. 114.
[125] Economist (London), 19 November 1955 in Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 53.
[126] Black Sash, 'As Others See Us', *Black Sash Journal* 2 (10) (December 1957), p. 6.
[127] Black Sash, 'Personality Parade– Miss Daisy Solomon', *Black Sash Journal* 2 (10) (December 1957), p. 5.
[128] M Deelman, 'Why I Left South Africa', *Black Sash Journal* 3 (3) (February 1958), p. 4.
[129] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, J.1.1.1, The Johannesburg Transvaal, 13 November 1955, p. 1.

models overseas. Groom stated that the Sash was seen as an organisation who loved 'liberty and constitutional order'.[130] They were seen as fighters for peace and the official white women's opposition. Groom also stated that she and the Electoral League supported the Sash's principles[131] and as such she wanted to become a regular subscriber to the Black Sash magazine, as a way of keeping the women in the League updated with the Sash's activities.

The Black Sash also published observations or letters from overseas readers in their monthly journals. Some discussed politics while others made observations while working visiting South Africa. Sybil Lumb, a fellow at the Royal Historical Society in London, interpreted the Sash as a 'safe guard' for liberty and justice, by defending the constitution.[132] Lumb highlighted the Sash's dedication, and because of their dedication to the cause, they should in Lumb's opinion be a 'permanent guard' in society regardless of racial or constitutional conflicts.[133] This was the first piece of work that discussed the Sash's role beyond race and fighting against apartheid, and focused on their role as a political watchdog bringing justice to society.

Racial conflict and apartheid were still nonetheless the most contested topics in the 1950s and 1960s. An opinion piece first published in the national newspaper, *The Rand Daily Mail* on the 17th of January 1961, and re-published in the Black Sash magazine in June 1961, chronicled an Australian observation on the racial differences in South Africa, and how non-whites were treated. They described South Africa as being 'backwards' by keeping racism alive through apartheid laws.[134] They also questioned the role of apartheid and relabelled it as a 'white problem' because it was introduced and maintained by the white population.[135] There is the assumption this article was included in the Black Sash magazine as it was this point specifically that made the Sash unique. These were white women who were not trying to maintain white control but rather trying to defend a constitution that protected non-whites, albeit in a limited capacity.

South Africa's role in the international community was also discussed in this opinion piece. The author stated that the international community would judge South

[130] T Groom, 'As Others See Us', *Black Sash Journal* 3 (23) (November 1959), p. 5.
[131] Ibid.
[132] S Lumb, 'The Sash: A Visitor's View', *Black Sash Journal*, 3 (15) (February 1959), p. 8.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Black Sash, 'An Australian Comments on South Africa's Insanity', *Black Sash Journal* 5 (3) (June 1961), p. 11.
[135] Ibid.

Africa due to its apartheid laws and as the international community changed, South Africa needed to change with it.[136] Not only was the country violating human rights, which became increasingly important due to the UDHR, first introduced in 1948; but it was demonstrating its lack of cooperation or flexibility with the international community.

Conclusion

Until now, the Black Sash's transnational influence and connections have not been analysed in South African historiography. This is in part because officially the Black Sash was focused on restoring the 1910 constitution. Their international connections and influence from outside the country have therefore been overlooked. Being for white women only meant the Sash had certain advantages non-European women did not possess. Much of this is linked to white privilege and class where members had time (due to the additional help of domestic servants– who were normally black– for housework and child care), financial means and opportunities to travel abroad. Black Sash members themselves realised the fortunate position they were in, and used their contacts and networks to also ensure international speakers were brought into the country so they could give lectures and seminars to the rest of the organisation and educate women who were not as privileged to travel abroad.

The Sash's religious focus was the first trigger point for their international presence. For its first two years of existence, the Sash rejected any suggestions to collaborate with other organisations. However, by 1957 the IDAMF invited the Sash to join a multiracial conference, thereby connecting them to the wider national liberation movement and transnational stage. The IDAMF's invitation was different from the other organisations, which resulted in the Sash accepting and participating with the organisation. This invitation from a religious organisation initiated a transnational link, which was appealing to Foley who was very religious in her own right.

The Black Sash's international representation was primarily built on international interest about apartheid. Organisations such as the IAW were interested in learning more about the Sash and helping promote the organisation and

[136] Black Sash, 'An Australian Comments on South Africa's Insanity', *Black Sash Journal* 5 (3) (June 1961), p. 11.

its fight against apartheid through creating links, being invited to speak at the IAW conference and even subscribing to the Sash's journal in 1957. However, the Sash did not reciprocate this approach. They did not actively pursue transnational links with other organisations such as the IAW. By 1958, the Black Sash lost touch with the IAW, indicating the Sash did not place transnationalism as a strategic priority and battled to position themselves ideologically.

The Sash also took part in activities that demonstrated they were aware of their European counterpart's suffrage campaigns and acknowledged their importance. In 1958, they were present at Emmeline Pankhurst's centenary celebrations, which was significant in helping to place the Black Sash internationally and locally. Firstly, by attending Pankhurst's centenary celebrations, the Sash acknowledged the earlier British and South African women's movements during the first wave of feminism. Secondly, their presence was an acknowledgment of their link to the WSPU, Pankhurst's organisation. Daisy Solomon, a Sash member in the 1950s, was very involved in the WSPU activities in her youth and had influential contacts in the British women's movement. Solomon was the bridge between the earlier women's movement and the 1950s women's organisations in South Africa, as well as the link to a wider transnational movement and international ideologies.

The Sash also influenced African women's organisations. This is demonstrated in the case of the Black Stole from South Rhodesia, a white women's only organisation, which found inspiration from the Sash and had similar protesting styles against the South Rhodesian government. This led the Sash to reiterate their organisational exclusivity for South Africans only and address issues only in the South African context. Therefore, the Sash was not linked to any international organisations, including the Black Stole. This in itself meant the Black Sash were contradictory in their actions. They took part in transnational events, but were not interested in pursuing further links nor in collaborating with other organisations. Their exclusivity meant the Sash did not make transnational connections a priority and they deliberately isolated themselves from other organisations.

Due to their international presence, the Sash received a lot of attention and press. The international press about the organisation was both positive and negative, and the organisation would often publish international opinion pieces about themselves in their journal. UK and international women's organisations, in particular, kept a closer watch on the Sash's development and their role in fighting

against apartheid. While the Sash was not aligned with the international feminist waves, they still presented an interest to the international community as women who were actively fighting for human rights against apartheid.

However, there were several restrictions related to the Sash's transnational links. Their constitution and racial exclusivity limited them. They were a South African organisation that only focused on the South African context and were not actively looking at creating transnational links. They had the opportunity to create these links; had the means to attend conferences, increase their profile and fight against apartheid internationally, however this did not fall within their remit, and as a result they did not pursue it further.

The Sash had a financial advantage, compared to the FEDSAW, to become part of a transnational, anti-apartheid movement. If the Sash had adopted human rights as an organisational aim earlier and had been open to collaboration, they would have had a stronger international presence as they had the potential and means to do well due to their financial situation, professional networks and educational links.

Black Sash members were therefore in a more privileged position to take part in transnationalism, compared to FEDSAW, due to the class to which they belonged. Jessie Power, a Sash member who was vital in the Sash's limited transnational interaction, moved to London in 1957. This put her in a prime geographic location to represent and spread the news about the Sash to European organisations, while also creating international networks and contacts, therefore making it possible to transition from a local to transnational movement. Despite this, the Sash only had international ties in so far as members who left South Africa and relocated to places like the UK still subscribed to and received the Black Sash's monthly journal. In this sense, the transnational element of the Sash was limited, and confined to the organisation's membership locally and abroad.

Despite the Sash not being a politically transnational group, their members benefitted from the migration of ideas and experiences from abroad for work or personal reasons. It was not uncommon for Sash leaders to have been educated abroad or to travel abroad for personal reasons. This broadened their networks and increased their confidence of their roles in fighting against apartheid.

While not formally part of their organisational aims, the Sash used transnationalism for educational purposes. The Sash used their networks of

academics to help increase exposure to other organisations and systems through education to help fight against apartheid within South Africa. The Sash's transnationalism emerged due to members' class and privilege rather than being a strategically motivated aim.

Chapter 6: Impact of FEDSAW and the Black Sash's transnational connections

Introduction

The FEDSAW and Black Sash's international engagement and connections had direct impacts on how both organisations functioned and their directions and contribution to the national liberation movement. While they had different international links with various organisations for distinct purposes, and their transnational circles did not overlap, the impacts of these connections on the organisations and overall anti-apartheid activism were the same. Transnationalism affected both organisations firstly by influencing their leadership and secondly by redefining their roles and contribution to the national liberation movement. The Federation was created on a foundation of global relationships with a strong sense of international and national collaborations. This approach was present in their early leaders such as Bernstein, Palmer and Alexander, all of whom were relatively well travelled and belonged to political organisations such as the CPSA and FCWU which had strong international links. This approach was further expanded by the second generation of FEDSAW leaders, where Ngoyi, Joseph and Tamana not only agreed with the need to engage with the international community, but actively attended conferences and events that would go on to promote the Federation and their fight against apartheid. All their international events took place in 1955, which included Joseph's attendance at the WPC, and Tamana and Ngoyi's attendance at the Congress of Mothers and the WIDF's organised Europe and Asia tour. These experiences exposed Tamana and Ngoyi to women's struggles in other countries and wider human rights issues and conflicts abroad. This gave the Federation's second generation of leaders the motivation and support to continue their fight against apartheid, which was evident in the increased number of anti-apartheid events they became part of.

By contrast, the Sash was more isolated where they were reluctant to collaborate with any other organisation, whether it be on a national or international scale. Under Foley's leadership, the Sash was solely focused on specific acts such as the Senate Bill, rather than a wider range of apartheid laws. However, by 1957,

there was a change of approach where the Black Sash became more active in establishing national collaborations with other South African organisations and creating international relationships specifically with women's organisations. The Sash's international engagements emerged in 1957 and 1958, which reflected a change in their leadership from Foley to Stott, and realigned the organisation's focus and was evident in their leaders. Stott became the Sash president in 1958, and like Joseph and Ngoyi, had experience of working in political parties. The latter, alongside the Sash's transnational links, helped Stott realign the Sash within South African politics, where she led the Sash to work more closely with local political parties such as the PAC. Similarly, Sinclair who was one of the Sash's founders, the Sash Chair since 1955 and became Black Sash president in 1961, also believed the Sash should be collaborating more with other organisations to achieve human rights and fight against apartheid in South Africa.

These leaders' new perspectives and knowledge helped situate them in the wider national liberation movement. This was evident in their contribution or role in key political events. After the FEDSAW's transnational engagement, the Federation organised the largest demonstration against passes for its time in August 1956. This protest consisted of 20,000 women from all races, classes and political organisations who protested against the government's decision that passes needed to be extended to women. This protest signified the Federation's influence in mobilising women and important role in the wider liberation movement, which led to Joseph and Ngoyi being arrested during the Treason Trial.

The five-year long Treason Trial started in 1956, when prominent male and female leaders from opposition organisations were arrested for treason and accused of trying to sabotage the government. While the trial attempted to slow down political activity against the government on one hand, it mobilised support for the liberation movement on the other. Following the trial, the Black Sash formally aligned with the Federation to create CATAPAW, bringing multiple organisations together to fight against passes. CATAPAW was short lived but it further entrenched the Sash in anti-apartheid activism by creating a bail fund which was dedicated to bailing women who were arrested due to pass laws out of jail; and the advice offices which were created to give black men and women free advice about the apartheid laws and passes.

The Sash continued with their political collaborations after the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, when a PAC protest turned violent and ended when the South

African police killed demonstrators and a state of emergency was declared. This event increased international pressure on the NP government to change apartheid laws; it also further united opposition organisations and led to the expansion of an underground movement that was more militant in nature.

The FEDSAW and Sash's transnationalism meant they were seen as threats by the government. The Federation's association with specific international organisations such as the WIDF left them being labelled as communist by the government and they were seen as a bigger threat compared to the Sash. However, the Black Sash became an increasing risk to the government and was also subject to house raids, phone tapping and jail. Transnationalism, through refocusing and realigning their political direction, brought these two organisations together, encouraging a relationship that in 1955, would have been impossible to create.

While transnationalism was an important factor that realigned the organisations in the national liberation movement, it also contributed to the FEDSAW and Sash's political development and growth within South African history and politics. Scholars such as Sprink, Burton, Michelman and Rogers glossed over the Black Sash's international connections, while personal accounts from Joseph, Robb, Bernstein and Alexander give more insight into the effects transnationalism had on the organisations in the 1950s and '60s. These accounts, alongside archival materials such as minutes from meetings and correspondence, draw a more comprehensive picture of the impact and direct role transnationalism played on how organisations situated themselves in anti-apartheid activism. The transnational impact on these both of these organisations in the 1950s and '60s has never been studied before. This chapter examines transnationalism's impact on the Black Sash and FEDSAW's leadership, position in anti-apartheid activism and the relationship between the Federation and Sash. In doing so, this chapter argues transnationalism had a significant effect on both organisations, helping them redefine South African women's position in anti-apartheid activism.

Leadership strengthened through transnationalism

South African women leaders and their viewpoints about South Africa politics were influenced by their international connections, which in turn increased their exposure to other organisations and challenges faced abroad, further encouraging

them to collaborate with other organisations. These women moved in similar circles that were not defined by race, class or religion, as they were united through their common struggles as women and aim for world peace.

FEDSAW's first generation of leaders had experience of working with international organisations, specifically the WIDF and the WPC. This first emerged with Palmer, Bernstein and Alexander. Josie Palmer, FEDSAW founder, established the Federation's predecessor[1] that also emphasised the importance of international links. The Transvaal All– Women's Union was created at an International Women's Day meeting in 1947 with the aim of creating a 'non-colour bar women's organisation'[2] that strived for world peace. The union had strong links with the WIDF, and according to newspapers, was created specifically in order to be able to affiliate with the WIDF.[3] It was led by individuals from various opposition parties and trade unions, such as Hettie Du Preez (Garment Worker's Union), Suriakala Patel (SAIC), and Bernstein and Palmer (both from the CPSA), which increased their exposure, impact and transnational links. Unfortunately there are limited archival sources available about the Transvaal All– Women's Union, which has limited historians' understanding of their transnational origins.

Palmer worked closely with Alexander who was a main actor in the South African transnational women's movement in the 1950s, as she was involved in various international organisations, and helped spread knowledge about South African women's political experiences at conferences in South Africa and abroad. Alexander was an advocate of international collaboration and in 1953 at a trade union conference in Port Elizabeth, she opened the conference by discussing the WIDF and 'women's subordination worldwide'[4] and then focusing on women's conditions in South Africa. She also contextualised the Federation internationally at their 1954 inauguration by stating that FEDSAW were striving for 'friendship and union'[5] through working with the WIDF to achieve world peace, and they would be joining the other 140 million women who were part of the WIDF.[6] By doing this, Alexander emphasised that while apartheid was a unique situation, women all over the world were facing similar oppression. This was also a strategic way that

[1] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 87.
[2] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 101.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 135.
[5] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.5.1, Ray's Speech, 1954, p. 2.
[6] Ibid.

Alexander could draw out commonalities with other countries, therefore getting them to be open to further collaboration with international women's organisations.

The second generation of FEDSAW leaders also went out of their way to actively be involved in international conferences and part of wider international dialogues on human rights. Ngoyi, Tamana and Joseph were abroad for most of 1955, the height of the Federation's international presence, spreading the word about their organisation, apartheid and South African women's political struggles. These experiences had a profound impact, especially on Ngoyi and Tamana, who had not travelled abroad before. Ngoyi explained the impact of the international trip meant she felt treated as a human being.[7] She had new experiences where she went to the theatre for the first time in the UK and had a white maid in Germany where she stated she 'was not used to someone doing our work.'[8] 'Our work' referred to the black domestic role in a white household, where it was common to have black women as maids and cleaners. Her trip abroad reaffirmed a sense of inclusiveness– that all women were part of the struggle and anti-apartheid activism.

Importantly, these conferences enabled the women to expand their networks. Tamana and Ngoyi had contact with other women in liberation movements such as Algerian and Palestinian, which both women could identify with.[9] Ngoyi also met influential individuals such as Sir Seretse Khama and Lady Ruth Khama, Botswana's first president and first lady, where they compared the political situations in both countries.[10] It is unclear whether Ngoyi and Tamana stayed in personal contact with their new international contacts, however the Federation kept its strong links with organisations such as the WIDF.

Ngoyi and Tamana's anxiety about their impending trip is clear in Ngoyi's memoir, where she felt she needed to bluff her way through her Europe/Asia trip in 1955. She felt her lack of education was evident in the way she spoke, and that she would be judged on her linguistic abilities and communication skills. However, her self-doubt dissipated when she realised 'language was not very important, but the knowledge of your country was the deciding factor.'[11] The information exchange at these events was about creating a dialogue, sharing knowledge and building

[7] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A2551, ZA HARA, Lilian Ngoyi's memoir, p. 12.
[8] Ibid., p. 13.
[9] M Daymond et al., *Women Writing Africa: The Southern Region* (New York: Feminist Press: City University of New York, 2003), p. 240.
[10] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A2551, ZA HARA, Lilian Ngoyi's memoir, p. 17.
[11] Ibid., p. 10.

networks. Additionally, Ngoyi was a charismatic speaker and was well received at international conferences. At the Congress of Mothers, Ngoyi spoke on behalf of the Federation and had a 'tremendous response'[12] from the audience. Alexander saw leadership qualities in Ngoyi early on and stated in correspondence to Bernstein that Ngoyi 'is such a nice person and must be helped so that she can become an important leader of the people.'[13] According to Joseph, South Africa needed leaders like Ngoyi who was 'uniquely charismatic'[14] as these leaders were needed for 'our liberation as a nation and as women'.[15] This helped gain international support for the Federation as well as supporting Ngoyi's leadership, which was also recognised by patriarchal organisations such as the ANC, when she won the ANC election into the National Executive Committee[16] in December 1955.

Similarly, Tamana was also a well-respected leader in the Federation. Tamana returned from her trip abroad with Ngoyi also having learnt extensively about women's political struggles overseas and the battle for world peace. When she returned to her village in Blouvlei she was greeted by the whole village accompanied by the 'thumbs up and Mayibuye Afrika',[17] translated as 'bring back Africa'. Villagers understood the importance of Tamana's travels abroad and that it would positively influence the national liberation movement. According to an article written in the banned left wing newspaper, *New Age*, Tamana was compared to the Queen of Sheba, bringing with her knowledge and strength from her travels abroad.[18] She was seen to have done the impossible, leaving South Africa without a passport, and venturing to the outside world where she could spread news of the injustices that were taking place in South Africa.

Unlike Ngoyi and Tamana, Joseph was well travelled, well connected and continued to build on her global connections. Joseph was born in the UK and had work experience in India, so she understood and had various experiences of living abroad and making contacts. Joseph was also well read and up to date with the then current events in South Africa and abroad. She stated in the Treason Trial that she

[12] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ae5.3, report of the Congress of Women, p. 2.
[13] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.8.2, correspondence from Ray Alexander to Hilda Bernstein, 4 May 1954.
[14] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A1985, A4.3.8, correspondence from Helen Joseph to Dorris Ngoyi, 9 May 1982.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses and Passes,* p. 221.
[17] John Morley, 'Dora comes from Europe' *New Age* 1 (47) (8 September 1955), p. 7.
[18] Ibid.

read overseas newspapers, specifically the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*[19] regularly to keep updated with international news.

Joseph used her knowledge and experience to compare South Africa's political system and development with that of other countries. She believed South Africa did not fit in with the historical or political struggle patterns[20] and was lagging behind the rest of the world, due to the apartheid legislation. Having said this, she believed in the importance of the international community and that only through international pressure would the white electorate change their minds and approaches linked to South Africa's oppressive legislation.[21] With this in mind, she understood the importance of maintaining international links and keeping the global community informed about what was happening in South Africa. The NP government censored what South African citizens were exposed to during the apartheid years, however people such as Joseph, Tamana and Ngoyi travelling abroad, discussing what they had been exposed to and what they were fighting against, updated the international community with their first-hand experiences.

Ngoyi, Tamana and Joseph's presence abroad contributed to international pressure on South Africa to challenge apartheid policies. This international pressure would finally occur, in Joseph's opinion, whether from within the country (through protests, violence, possibly even civil wars) or outside of the country[22] such as international sanctions. This explains why it was a serious offence for people like Ngoyi, Tamana and Joseph to speak abroad and gain support for anti-apartheid activism internationally. This in itself becomes a transnational action, leaving South Africa and sharing ideas and experiences with an international audience, in order to gain support and fight for equality and freedom.

Many individuals and organisations fought for similar causes, unifying individuals and organisations. Joseph realised that she was in a fortunate position where she could travel and be exposed to different environments and people. However, she felt it was important that the Congress was also made aware of what was happening abroad.[23] This was the motivation for her to write and speak about

[19] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 66, p. 14,662.
[20] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,921.
[21] Ibid.
[22] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,921.
[23] Ibid., p. 13,952.

worldwide trends at protests, rallies and universities, as South Africa was automatically part of political trends and debates.

Joseph had a strong sense that the international community was important for the morale of the organisation, considering that South Africa was so isolated. She reminded the Federation that they were not alone (even if they felt that within the constraints of the South African borders), ideologically they were supported by like-minded organisations. 'We are not fighting alone– 140 million women of 66 countries will watch us, support us, give us their encouragement. They know oppression in South Africa is a threat not only to Africa, but the world.'[24] There was a sense of comfort knowing that there were organisations observing South Africa's political conflict and the Federation's actions and reactions. Joseph highlights another important point through this quote. It is the interconnected nature of South Africa's oppression, which was fundamentally a threat to humanity and human rights, and as such was the international community's problem as much as South Africa's. Joseph was looking outwards from South Africa and making connections and networks.

By the late 1950s, the Black Sash and FEDSAW had international and political activities in common. Despite the Black Sash reiterating they were apolitical, members were allowed to be associated with political parties in a personal capacity,[25] such members included Nancy Dick who was also involved in the FEDSAW.[26] This would have to be in their personal capacity as they were formally affiliated with the Black Sash and did not represent the Sash when they were with other parties.

The FEDSAW were open and flexible to international collaborations early on in their organisation and therefore felt the effects of transnationalism sooner. However, the Black Sash's international connections and impact emerged later with the change of leadership. The Black Sash was the most isolated it would ever be under its first president, Ruth Foley, who led the organisation from 1955 until 1958. The only international link Foley considered for the organisation was the IDAMF with its religious basis. Foley's niece by marriage, Diana Davis, described her 'a very Christian woman',[27] which was further supported by how the Sash was run where

[24] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F3, Vol. 7, Letter to FEDSAW members by Helen Joseph, January 1956, p. 1,313.
[25] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[26] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, FEDSAW folders AC1.Inaugaural papers, 10 March 1954.
[27] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.

journals ended in prayers, and Black Sash meetings started and ended with prayers. Their religious transnational link was not a lucrative international connection as most religious organisations felt the Black Sash was too politicised and deviated from spiritual messages advocated in religious organisations. Aside from the IDAMF connection, Foley did not encourage the Sash to create more links with international allies.

After Foley resigned, Eulalie Stott, vice-chairman since 1957,[28] became the Black Sash president from 1958 to 1960. Under Stott's leadership, the Black Sash went abroad to represent South African women at Pankhurst's centenary, helping the Sash to gain additional support. This helped the Sash to network with well-connected individuals and organisations. However, Stott's leadership was characterised by most of the Sash's political collaborations and integrating the organisation into the wider national liberation movement. As a former Liberal Party activist,[29] Stott was well networked with political activists from various political parties and worked alongside PAC leaders such as Phillip Kgosana. An unlikely and unexpected partnership between the PAC and Black Sash emerged. Stott identified with the PAC as they shared some common ideologies, mainly that both organisations rejected the 'communist influences in the ANC'.[30] This collaboration situated the Sash in the wider anti-apartheid activism movement, forcing them out of the isolation phase and integrating more into the national liberation movement.

In addition to Stott's leadership and call for collaboration, Jean Sinclair also progressed the Black Sash's approach related to collaboration. She was one of only six founding members who had a political past. Sinclair was linked to the Springbok Legion, was actively involved in the UP, was the Chair of the UP's Johannesburg Parktown Women's Branch and was a member of the Johannesburg City Council in 1954.[31] The inception of the Black Sash was Sinclair's idea, as she felt white women who were already in a privileged position by virtue of race should be politically protesting against the apartheid legislation such as the Senate Bill.[32] Sinclair was very politically active and opinionated about South African politics.

[28] Black Sash, 'African's Diminishing Land Rights and the Neglect of the Reserves', Black *Sash Journal* 2 (10) (December 1957), p. 9.
[29] Ibid.
[30] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC1368, B1.3, women's vision foundation: Eulalie Stott.
[31] Black Sash, 'The Story of the Women's Defence of the Constitution League', *Black Sash Journal* 1 (1) (January 1956), p. 6.
[32] Ibid.

Following Molly Peterson's brief presidency from 1960 until 1961, Sinclair solidified her role in the organisation and became president from 1961 until 1975. Sinclair's dominant voice and strong leadership had been felt in the organisation since it was established. She was the Black Sash chair[33] until she became president.

She encouraged the Sash to widen their aims from only fighting against the Senate Bill to fighting for peace and human rights for all. Sinclair believed the Sash should work closely with all races and that cooperation with other organisations was key.[34] It was under her leadership the Sash adopted the UDHR and started to actively align themselves with messages conveyed by the Freedom Charter.

Like Stott, Sinclair believed the Sash should be more active in their protesting styles by taking a stand politically and having the courage to protest openly on their own about issues related to comrades in other political organisations. This was evident when they openly protested against Joseph's house banning in 1962.[35] Joseph was the first person in South Africa placed under house arrest, which meant it was illegal for her to leave her home in the evenings at weekends, as well as having any visitors. This was the first time the Black Sash had protested in support of a fellow female comrade, signifying the Sash were becoming more integrated into the anti-apartheid movement and had started identifying with other opposition organisations.

Transnational experiences reinforcing FEDSAW and the Black Sash's role in anti-apartheid activism

International connections of South African organisations and political parties were threatening for the NP government as they meant opposition organisations could gain support against apartheid, thereby adding international pressure for the government to change their apartheid policies. As a result, the NP decided to ban individuals and organisations who were associated with international activities under the Suppression of Communism Act (1950). This act meant the government could label any organisations that were communist in nature, or those who associated with

[33] Black Sash, 'Meet the Black Sash: National Executive Who's Who', *Black Sash Journal* 1 (3) (March 1956), p. 8.
[34] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD 1457, Ad4.1.1, ' Jean Sinclair: independent Candidate', p. 3.
[35] New Age, 'Shocked by Ban on Helen Joseph', *New Age* 9 (1) (18 October 1962), p. 1.

similar organisations, as a national threat and therefore unlawful.[36] This led to the banning of early Federation leaders such as Alexander in 1953, who was arrested due to her role in the FCWU and several other organisations and trade unions; and Bernstein, also banned in 1953 due to her role as secretary in the SACP.[37] Additionally, Palmer was banned from FEDSAW and 48 other organisations for a minimum of five years. She sent a letter of encouragement to her fellow FEDSAW colleagues, highlighting that the 'struggle will go on and ours will be the day of victory'.[38] Palmer believed that women played a fundamental role in the struggle, and would continue to in order to achieve freedom. However the movement was widespread and did not depend on the few women who were banned.

> How foolish the government is to think that by debarring a few women from meetings, they can break the growing force of the women's movement. For everyone of us that fades into the background, a thousand new leaders spring forward.[39]

Palmer's banning proved to be a testing time for the Federation. Joseph wrote a letter directly to the Minister of Justice, Charles Swart, asking him to reconsider Palmer's banning as she had only done good for the community, and also reminding the minister that her banning would not prevent the FEDSAW from carrying out their work. 'We deeply resent your action and assure you that our work will go from strength to strength, regardless of the banning of individuals'.[40] These words reiterated that the apartheid legislation was damaging to society and democracy, but it would not stop women from fighting for freedom or taking part in the national liberation movement.

This set-back did not slow the Federation's activities. The largest protest organised by the Federation since their international events and conferences in 1955 was the Women's March on 9 August 1956. This involved women from all political parties and organisations including the Black Sash. The Federation had contacted

[36] Davenport, and Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, p. 385.
[37] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, Ef 3.3.2, 'Suppression of Communism Act, p. 3.
[38] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ad1.2, correspondence from Josie Palmer to FEDSAW, 26 October 1955.
[39] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac2.5, correspondence from Hilda Watts to FEDSAW, August 1956.
[40] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ad1.2, correspondence from Helen Joseph to the Minister of Justice, 19 November 1955.

the Sash for collaborative protests several times in the past with no success. Jo MacRobert, a Black Sash member, stated 'The hand of friendship that was extended to the Black Sash by the Federation of South African Women was rejected'[41] and later, Black Sash membership was refused to several women who had been members of the Communist Party and the COD.[42] These rejections were due to suspicions that the Cold War raised about left wing individuals and organisations.[43] Therefore the relationship between the Black Sash and FEDSAW was not reciprocal.

Joseph asked the Black Sash to support the 1956 protest, urging the Sash to join as women and mothers who were fighting against passes, which would ultimately affect future generations of the country.[44] R.A Dietrich from the Sash replied stating that due to the their constitution, the Sash did not 'associate their organisation with protests of this nature.[45] However there was a slight change of heart about this, when on the 3 August 1956, the Black Sash's central executive meeting agreed to support the protest and agreed they would only work with other protest movements if it was organised by the Sash themselves.[46] The Sash encouraged members to attend this demonstration in their personal capacity and stated in minutes that many members would be attending it.[47] There is speculation about just how many and which Sash members attended the protest,[48] as a registration of attendees to this event does not exist. However fellow Black Sash members have recorded that Sash founder Tercia Pybus[49] attended this demonstration with a handful of other Sash members.

There was overlap between the Black Sash and FEDSAW, as there was a personal connection between these two organisations. Women from the FEDSAW and Sash also had friendships that went beyond the constraints of their organisations. Joseph and Alexander had personal relationships with members from the Black Sash,[50] such as with Dot Cleminshaw, a prominent Sash leader who worked with Joseph in the 1960s on the Human Rights Welfare Committee[51] and

[41] MacRobert, 'Forty Years–a Celebration', Black Sash pamphlet, 37 (3) (May 1995), p. 2.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, Central Executive Committee, C1, Letter from Joseph to the Black Sash, 30 July 1956.
[45] Ibid.
[46] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, Central Executive Committee, C1, Minutes from the Central Executive committee, 3 August 1956.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[49] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice*, p. 30.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Dot Cleminshaw, 'Hats off', Black Sash 40th anniversary pamphlet, 37 (May 1995), p. 9.

became friends with Joseph.[52] These personal connections contributed to the Sash's curiosity about FEDSAW and its leaders. Fellow Black Sash member, Peggy Roberts, asked Cleminshaw if Joseph and the FEDSAW were communists.[53] It was through these conversations the Black Sash members began to understand the liberation movement and challenge who the government labelled as national threats.

The August 1956 protest, in particular empowered women and further cemented FEDSAW's and women's contributions to anti-apartheid activism. It was the largest anti-apartheid protest of its time with 20,000 protesters in attendance, and the Federation were aware of how they increased their exposure and presence in the national liberation movement but also as a potential threat to the government. As a result of this protest, the government threatened FEDSAW not to attempt another mass protest against passes again. Unperturbed, the Federation stated 'once you have reached the highest peak of a mountain, you do not need to climb to the top again'.[54] This response demonstrates two things: firstly the government was no longer intimidating to the FEDSAW as they had made history by organising such a large event against passes; secondly the Federation felt they no longer needed to prove themselves to their male counterparts as they had made the point that women were a fixed part of fighting against apartheid.

Additionally, FEDSAW women were seen as trail blazing ahead of men in their fight against apartheid. This was recognised by COPE, who declared the women seemed a 'length ahead of men',[55] especially when fighting against passes and influx control regulations. The ANC also used this opportunity to recognise and acknowledge the women's contribution to the liberation struggle and openly supported[56] the FEDSAW stating their 'able leadership'[57] would help win the struggle. The Federation were recognised for their leadership and role within the national liberation movement.

This political confidence had associated consequences. The Federation's international activities were concentrated in 1955, which was likely to have increased their confidence and helped them refocus on their aims and the overall direction the

[52] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[53] Cleminshaw, 'Hats off', Black Sash 40th anniversary pamphlet, 37 (May 1995), p. 9.
[54] Joseph, *Side by Side*, p. 85.
[55] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Cb1.5.3, FEDSAW memorandum, 9 August 1959, p. 2.
[56] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac2.5, correspondence between the FEDSAW and ANC (Transvaal branch), date unknown.
[57] Ibid.

organisation was moving towards. This led to several protests including their historic August 1956 protest. By December 1956, another event would go on to challenge the Federation's role in anti-apartheid activism. The Treason Trial started in 1956 and ran until 1961. Prominent opposition leaders and comrades were arrested on charges of treason with alleged conspiracy to overthrow the government.[58] Most large and influential opposition organisations were affected with their leaders being arrested overnight. Joseph and Ngoyi were arrested under accusations of treason, which led to Joseph being banned in 1957 [59] and placed under house arrest,[60] while Ngoyi was banned from all political activity in 1961.[61] The Treason Trial was the government's attempt to stop opposition to the government, and therefore continue passing apartheid legislation.

Treason Trial records reveal just how much of an impact transnational connections had on the FEDSAW and wider national liberation movement. Joseph stated in her Treason Trial testimony that as a country which faced many injustices, there was a lot of international support for the opposition parties. Joseph was keenly aware of the 'world wide trends'[62] to move towards equality and independence. She also referenced Harold Macmillan's speech by stating 'winds of change' were blowing in South Africa and Africa,[63] using this as a way of appealing to the NP's desire for wanting independence from the UK, but also trying to emphasise that apartheid would inevitably come to an end. Unfortunately Ngoyi's Treason Trial files were missing from the archives, however reference was made to some of her speeches in other Treason Trial folders, giving insight into how the government, during the trial, tried to label all accused as communists and therefore claiming they were unlawful as they tried to overthrow the government.

The Treason Trial was on-going for several years and along with the Suppression of Communism Act, stunted FEDSAW's political growth. FEDSAW members were severely restricted and banned from talking to each other[64] and other political comrades. Organisations within the Federation such as the ANCWL were banned in 1960, which resulted in most of the FEDSAW's membership ceasing to

[58] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, p. 232.
[59] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1985, A2, Joseph interview (transcript), p. 3.
[60] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 104.
[61] Boy Nxumalo, 'Heros of our Revolution'*, Dawn*, 8 (3) (1984), p. 27.
[62] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD 1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,952.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 104.

exist.[65] By 1961, the FEDSAW had their last national conference in Port Elizabeth,[66] and their last Transvaal conference in 1962 with the banning of the COD.[67] This meant that by 1962 both black and white women's political organisations were no longer able to be affiliated with the Federation. By 1963, women leaders from FEDSAW and affiliated organisations were banned from regional and national meetings,[68] and most members went abroad in exile, still advocating against apartheid.[69] The combination of the above factors made it impossible for the Federation to continue functioning in the 1960s.

Banning prominent political leaders and continuing to enforce apartheid laws nonetheless worked against the government, as it meant the new generation of opposition leaders created an underground movement where their international links would once again help strengthen their role in fighting against apartheid and mobilise further support against the system. Women from the Federation still saw themselves as an integral part of the national liberation movement, and from 1961 they became part of the ANC's underground and militant resistance[70] 'Umkonto we Sizwe', translated as 'Spear of the Nation', while others become involved in non-political fields such as self-help organisations, day care and so forth.[71] The international connections emerged again in the 1960s for the FEDSAW and other opposition organisations, with a different purpose. Rather than being used for education and gaining support for women's roles in fighting for world peace, the transnational links from the 1960s onwards became more militant and revolved around building weaponry and militant support to specifically fight against the apartheid government.

Unlike the FEDSAW, the Treason Trial did not directly affect Black Sash members. This was partly because the government did not deem them such a threat as the Federation and they were not formally integrated into the national liberation movement. With FEDSAW and other women's opposition organisations banned, the Black Sash became the most active white women's organisation in the late 1950s[72] and was an attractive organisation to join as it was legally against apartheid.[73] Sue

[65] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ab.3, 'Federation of Women', p. 2.
[66] Ibid., p. 3.
[67] Ibid., p. 2.
[68] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ab3, 'The Federation of South African Women', 1963.
[69] Interview with Sophia Williams-De Bruyn, 29 June 2006, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Johannesburg, South Africa.
[70] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 104.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Bernstein, *For their Triumphs and for their Tears,* p. 107.
[73] Maclean, *Strike a Woman, Strike a Rock, p.* 20

Van Der Merwe, a Black Sash member, believed other women's organisations during the 1950s were 'underground', meaning that to join, one needed to go overseas for training,[74] whereas the Sash was easily accessible and not militant, so there was no training needed.

None of the Black Sash members were arrested in the Treason Trial, however due to their increased involvement in the national liberation movement, the Sash felt the need to oppose the trial and support their comrades. In 1960, Sash members such as Noel Robb were linked to the Defence and Aid Fund which was banned from 1960 until 1967.[75] This was an organisation that defended those accused in the Treason Trial and supported their families. While money from this fund came from London, any correspondence Robb had was burnt and destroyed due to fear of being prosecuted, after the Special Branch interrogated her in her home.[76] Unfortunately there are no other surviving documents in the archives to elaborate further on this fund or its international links.

With that said, the Sash realised the importance of continuing to fight against apartheid in the absence of dominant organisations such as the Federation. The Sash's international events took place at the beginning of the Treason Trial, specifically in 1957 and 1958, and seemed to have reaffirmed their role in fighting against apartheid, and refined their focus as an organisation to get more involved in local politics. From 1958 onwards, they were involved more in local politics, and concentrated on creating local initiatives that would go on to protest against apartheid and also help the most vulnerable in society. These included CATAPAW; the advice offices and bail fund; and the Sharpeville Massacre.

After these international events, global communications and change in leadership, the Black Sash were open to collaborating with all opposition organisations in the national liberation movement. The FEDSAW in particular was eager to collaborate with the Sash, and on more than one occasion invited the organisation to attend and observe the Federation's conferences and meetings. The first of these conferences was on 23 June 1957, where Green and Foley attended and reported that the conference itself rushed decision-making regarding the protest,

[74] Ibid.
[75] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p. 53.
[76] Ibid., p. 52.

and emotions were high amongst the non-European women.[77] It was noted that Green would organise a meeting with Weinberg from FEDSAW, in potentially joining a FEDSAW demonstration, protesting against passes and the Group Areas Act.[78] Subsequent meeting minutes stated that Green advised Weinberg that the protest should be focused on one main issue,[79] in this case passes rather than the Group Areas Act. There was a mutually beneficial relationship between the two organisations, where they were advising each other.

After the Sash's presence at the IAW conference in July 1957, their attitude towards potential collaborations with other oppositional organisations changed. In the same year, the Sash in the Western Cape protested at the opening of Parliament, and set up a float depicting a wheel that was pushed by men and women of different races with the caption 'forward together',[80] demonstrating that the Black Sash had adapted its approach and was interested in collaborating with various organisations and activists against apartheid. The wheel also resembled COPE's logo in 1955, which united all major opposition parties and created the Freedom Charter. This suggested they saw themselves as part of a wider movement against apartheid and succumbed to forming alliances and partnerships.

One month after the Sash's presence at the IAW, the Black Sash and FEDSAW's first formal collaboration began in August 1957, with the creation of the CATAPAW. This was formed when Amy Thornton, Secretary of the Cape Peninsula COD,[81] contacted Eulalie Stott directly to help raise money to bail out women jailed for violating pass laws, and donate food and milk as these women had babies with them.[82] CATAPAW was a multiracial and multi-political organisation, consisting of the NCW, Anglican Church Mother's Union, ANCWL, FEDSAW and the Black Sash.[83] Their main aim was to fight against the passes, which united them,[84] and was inspired from the FEDSAW's national pass campaigns[85] such as the August 1956 protest. CATAPAW was recognised as the brainchild of Thornton and Stott,

[77] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, Central Executive Committee, C1, Minutes from the Central Executive committee, 24 June 1957.
[78] Ibid.
[79] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, Central Executive Committee, C1, Minutes from the Central Executive committee, 1 July 1957.
[80] Black Sash, 'Congratulations Cape Town!', *Black Sash Journal* 2 (2) (March 1957), p. 4.
[81] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC1368, B1.3, women's vision foundation: Eulalie Stott.
[82] Ibid.
[83] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: Cape West Letters, September 1957, 2.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice,* p. 81.

with the latter's official title being CATAPAWs press liaison officer.[86] The membership and collaboration demonstrates how diverse CATAPAW was and the Sash's involvement in CATAPAW was surprising given its conservative past.

However, CATAPAW was not a nation-wide initiative for the Black Sash, which demonstrates the lack of support or lack of knowledge about the initiative within the Sash. Members such as Davenport and Davis, who were based in Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, did not know about CATAPAW and were not involved in it at all.[87] They were aware of the pass laws in particular as this became a driving force behind the advice offices, which both women were involved in. Their lack of knowledge about CATAPAW, demonstrates there was a flaw in communication and possibly a split within the organisation and regional branches. It also reinforces the ideological uncertainty in the organisation, and what they stood for.

Despite the Sash's increased awareness of pass laws, the Black Sash journal had minimal coverage on the passes. Their 1959 publication highlighted a specific case in Wellington in the Cape where the Black Sash tried to bail out six black women who were arrested because they violated the pass laws.[88] It is unclear as to why this case was chosen in particular. However, it was obvious that passes were not the Sash's primary driving force until 1959 and even so, there was no mention of CATAPAW or collaboration with other women's political organisations.

There were difficulties in CATAPAW and other political collaborations due to the different political ideological stances and protesting styles. Black Sash was more conservative compared to the FEDSAW, who were openly more radical especially around issue of passes. Similarly, protests against pass laws by both the ANCWL and Black Sash in 1959 did not go well. The Sash distanced themselves from the illegal activities that the ANCWL under took as part of their protests, and continued to protest in silence.[89] These different kinds of protest ultimately divided the Sash from the rest of the organisations, however they also exposed them to other women's political organisations' aims and protest styles.

By the late 1950s, CATAPAW lost momentum. In 1959, the NCW withdrew from CATAPAW and was replaced by SAIRR and the Civil Rights League, which

[86] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives, BC1368, B1.3, women's vision foundation: Eulalie Stott.
[87] Interview with Diana Davis, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[88] Black Sash, 'Why Passes?', *Black Sash Journal*, 3 (19) (June/ July 1959), p. 1.
[89] Brendon Broll, *The Civil Rights League of South Africa against Apartheid: The Early Years (1948–1969)*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Birkbeck, 2015, p. 140.

was mostly financial support.[90] At the Sash's regional meeting held on 31 July 1961, it was unanimously agreed the Sash would no longer associate with CATAPAW and would withdraw from the organisation,[91] due to the ANC's banning from politics.[92] The political context proved to be trying, where oppositional organisations were banned from all political activities. While the Sash was not officially banned, not having support from organisations associated with the national liberation movement made it difficult for them to continue fighting against passes.

Historiography claimed the Black Sash's role against passes became a large campaign that influenced the government. According to Michelman, the government believed black people did not support pass laws due to the Black Sash and CATAPAW.[93] However archival documents indicate passes were a consideration that emerged in the Black Sash in 1958, while the FEDSAW was known for their national anti-pass campaigns in 1955 that would go on to define the Federation. These campaigns were seen as a national threat that had potential to mobilise people against the government, which explains why leaders were banned, arrested and involved in the Treason Trial. FEDSAW's direct domination of anti-pass campaigns demonstrated that women proved their political potential through planning and organising a monumental protest in August 1956. However it was also the FEDSAW who responded directly and promptly to the government's decision to extend passes to black women, unlike the ANC, who seemed to take their time deciding whether this was a cause to fight.[94] This approach was contested by the Pan-Africanists within the ANC, causing further tension and an eventual split in the ANC.[95] This resulted in the creation of the PAC, whose fight against passes materialised into a protest in Sharpeville in 1960. The Sharpeville massacre on 21 March 1960 personified local tensions between opposition parties, PAC and the ANC, and the apartheid system. Tensions peaked when the South African police fired shots at a peaceful PAC crowd who were protesting against pass laws, killing 69 people and injuring approximately 181 people. This resulted in a state of emergency and made international headlines, bringing the international community's

[90] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 104.
[91] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC1165, Regional Council Meeting, 31 July 1961, p. 2.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 105.
[94] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 190.
[95] Ibid.

attention to the discriminatory laws in South Africa and the brutal response to an otherwise peaceful protest.

The effect of CATAPAW, the advice offices, bail fund and the Defence and Aid Fund meant the Black Sash were more integrated in fighting against apartheid and working with similar opposition organisations. This was clear in how the Black Sash described themselves. In 1961, the Sash labelled themselves as being the 'first white political group' who co–operated with the ANC in 1957.[96] This demonstrates the organisation's evolution and how they found their ideological position in anti-apartheid activism, and finally succumbed to accepting they were political and discarded their apolitical label.

The positive outcomes from CATAPAW were the various initiatives that would emerge. Through CATAPAW, the Sash were exposed to passes, laws and other issues through the FEDSAW that directly affected the black population, and decided to create the bail fund and advice offices. The bail fund, set up in 1958, specifically helped bail women from prison who were arrested because they had protested against passes[97] or violated pass regulations. Through CATAPAW, the Black Sash gained experience of working with African women about issues related to passes, and as a result, they created their first advice office in Athlone, Cape Town in 1958. The aim of these offices was to advise black men and women about segregation policies and issues such as influx control and pass laws.[98] In creating the advice offices, the Black Sash realised they needed to understand the laws better and had pro-bono lawyers to help them with this,[99] one of whom was Donald Molteno, a well–respected lawyer in the Cape. Advice offices would eventually be a defining characteristic of the Black Sash[100] that gradually spread throughout the country.

Through working in CATAPAW and in the advice offices, the Sash members learnt extensively about apartheid legislation, specifically the pass laws. It was here, that the organisation learnt directly from African women[101] about the plight and experiences of the apartheid laws on black South Africans. Thornton saw herself as helping to bridge the Sash with the struggles related to passes and other issues in

[96] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AE862, C3, National Conference 1956–59, p. 1.
[97] MacRobert, 'Forty Years–a Celebration', Black Sash pamphlet, 37 (3) (May 1995), p. 3.
[98] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p. 40.
[99] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice*, p. 81.
[100] Burton, 'The Black Sash Story' p. 130.
[101] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.

the townships.[102] The Sash's interpreter at their Cape Athlone Office, Lettie Malindi, brought increased knowledge, experience and awareness about the pass laws to the Sash.[103] Malindi, an ANCWL supporter, did not allow her politics to get in the way of work,[104] especially as the Sash was not affiliated with anti-apartheid organisations. Despite this, Malindi acknowledged there was a collaborative ambiance in the advice offices, where the ANCWL and Sash were helping each other.[105] The symbolism of having Malindi's presence in the Sash indirectly demonstrated the Sash was not opposed to other anti-apartheid organisations. If anything, there was a silent understanding of cooperation amongst the women, regardless of their political affiliations. This was the Sash's new approach from the late 1950s onwards.

The Cape Town Sash women were the only Black Sash members who created a formal collaboration with another women's political organisation such as the FEDSAW and were rather progressive thinking in relation to collaborations. This could have occurred because the Cape women were exposed to a broader range of women with political motives.[106] Additionally, the advice offices in the Cape were the first to be created in South Africa, and it took a couple of years to expand them to the rest of the country.[107] The creation of these offices led to the Black Sash being labelled as radical in the white community. However, as Davenport stated, 'Actually [we were] not radical at all you know, [we were] just trying to help people who were in trouble.'[108] The Sash was proactively helping the wider community and by doing so, started to understand the direct implications of apartheid through first-hand experiences.

The Sash became more proactive and involved in collaborative events such as various multiracial conferences. In December 1957, a multiracial protest was organised; it comprised SAIRR, FEDSAW, the NCW, the South African Bureau for Racial Affairs (SABRA), trade unions, Congresses and the Salvation Army. Those who attended went as individuals rather than political parties,[109] and the aim of the conference was to analyse and address 'human relations in a multiracial society',[110] where issues related to economics, politics and civil rights were discussed. In

[102] Interview with Amy Thornton, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[103] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p. 40.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Interview with Lettie Malindi by Ruendree Govinder, 23 May 2005.
[106] Interview with Mary Burton, 4 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Interview with Elizabeth Davenport, 9 August 2016, interviewed by Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, South Africa.
[109] New Age, 'Workers call for Protest Strike', *New Age*, 4 (2) (31 October 1957), p. 1.
[110] Ibid.

January 1958, the Black Sash reported a limited amount of information about the multiracial conference in Johannesburg, stating who was involved in the conference such as the ANC's leader Govan Mbeki, Alan Paton (Civil Rights League) and reverends from various churches who addressed an audience.[111] Unfortunately, nothing else about the conference was discussed in the Black Sash journals. Despite this, the Black Sash's interests expanded to other legislation such as the Group Areas Act and demonstrated they were open to working with other organisations and were responding to wider political issues in a more commanding manner.

Women's anti-pass protests were never as violent or fatal as the Sharpeville Massacre. Internationally, the massacre was not known for the finer details and specificity of the passes, but rather the brutality behind the apartheid regime against black people. While the massacre was a tragic event, it further united opposition parties to fight against the NP, and the previously 'apolitical' Sash was actively aligning themselves with political parties. Collaboration between the Sash and the PAC was further enhanced after the Sharpeville Massacre.[112] Stott worked alongside PAC activists such as Phillip Kgosana and the organisation related to the PAC as they shared some common ideologies, mainly that both organisations rejected the 'communist influences in the ANC'.[113] Five days after the massacre, the Sash filled three large lorries with food for people in townships– after the Sharpeville massacre residents were restricted to townships such as Langa and Nyanga, [114] as the South African Defence Force (SADF) had surrounded the townships and enforced a rule where people needed to apply for special permits before they could enter the townships.[115] Essentially these townships were under lockdown, and residents could not leave to buy food or other necessities. As a result, of organising and sending food into these townships, Sash members, Nancy Dick, Lettie Malindi and Jack Simons, were arrested and held in detention for five months.[116] This was the first time Sash members had been arrested and through their actions, they proved they were fully immersed in anti-apartheid activism. It also signified there was a change in the government's response to the organisation, who through their connection with the PAC, were now seen as a plausible threat.

[111] Black Sash, 'The Multiracial Conference', *Black Sash Journal* 2 (2) (January 1958), p. 7.
[112] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p. 44.
[113] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives, BC1368, B1.3, women's vision foundation: Eulalie Stott.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Black Sash, 'The Black Sash and the Emergency', *Black Sash Journal* 4 (4) (August 1960), p. 4.
[116] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p. 47.

The link between the PAC and Sash emerged from an unlikely relationship. The PAC did not formally ask the Black Sash to organise and donate food to the township however Stott came up with this idea from her friendship with Kgosana.[117] The organisation created 'new bonds of goodwill between White and non-White, and made a practical contribution towards achieving the between society we all desire'.[118] This approach was a radical change from the Sash in 1955 who declined to work with other organisations and refused to protest in an illegal fashion; to a more modern organisation that saw beyond political alliances and wanted justice for all South Africans regardless of race, even if the law advocated racism.

The Sash also started to publicly respond to political protests and campaigns. The organisation reacted to the Sharpeville massacre in their journal, publically declaring their stance to the government and role in fighting against apartheid. In response to the Sharpeville massacre and Black Sash arrests, they stated 'it is our policy to try to mitigate the suffering caused by unjust legislation.'[119] This reinforced the Sash's commitment to human rights to fight against apartheid alongside opposition parties, therefore challenging government authorities. It also demonstrated that the Sash's antagonism towards the government had evolved from silent protests in 1955 focused on one bill, to more protests in the 1960s that were collaborative and focused on protecting human rights, and were opposed to several laws.

After the Sharpeville massacre, political activity declined sharply. CATAPAW was terminated in September 1961 after Stott's recommendation; in 1962, FEDSAW was banned and by 1963, it was mandatory for black women to carry passes.[120] The Black Sash demonstrated their support for their political comrades by continuing their protests. They protested against Joseph's house banning in 1962,[121] signifying they were not only more integrated in the national liberation movement but they had also changed their ideological perspectives towards anti-apartheid activists. In their earlier years, the Sash would not have associated with Joseph as she was seen as an extremist for aligning herself with non-European opposition parties. The Sash was

[117] Interview with Eulalie Stott by Ruendree Govinder on 23 May 2005.
[118] Black Sash, 'No Change', *Black Sash Journal*, 4 (4) (August 1960), p. 2.
[119] Ibid.
[120] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC1368, B1.1, Black Sash– Early history, p. 3.
[121] New Age, 'Shocked by Ban on Helen Joseph', *New Age* 9 (1) (18 October 1962), p. 1.

one of the very few organisations not banned during apartheid and it continued openly fighting against apartheid in the 1960s, '70s and '80s.

Both organisations were at risk of prosecution by the government. Women from the Federation felt this more so than the Black Sash. Ngoyi was detained for five months in 1960, and in solitary confinement for 72 days. She was a victim of house raids and while under political restriction, she made a living by making dresses.[122] Joseph was banned twice, the first time was due to the Suppression of Communism Act and she was subsequently not allowed to attend political gatherings; the second banning was due to the Riotous Assemblies Act (1956), where she was only allowed in the magisterial area of Johannesburg.[123] Both lasted five years and were enforced in the late 1950s. Joseph was also the first person to be placed under house arrest in South Africa as a result of the Treason Trial.

Like the FEDSAW, the Black Sash members were at risk of being arrested, banned and detained. In the early 1960s, Mary Coke, a Black Sash member, was arrested and put on trial for being in a black township illegally while Dot Cleminshaw was arrested and found guilty of possessing banned literature and refused to pay the fine that went along with her arrest.[124] Stott's and Robb's homes were raided for literature and correspondence a couple of times, while Malindi was arrested and detained for five months[125] in 1960. Joan Pare, one of the earliest members in the Sash, recalled how she chaired one of the first Sash meetings at 11am, and by 2pm her phone was tapped.[126] The Sash were still subject to intimidation in the 1960s, despite not being officially barred from political activities by the government. These women, like the FEDSAW, were resilient and fought for justice for non-Europeans when they could have chosen an easier life, especially as part of the privileged middle to upper class white population. By the end of the 1950s, the Black Sash and FEDSAW had more in common than not, and were actively working collectively in the national liberation movement.

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[122] Unit on Apartheid, UN report, 'Women Against Apartheid in South Africa', Digital Innovation South Africa (DISA), November 1975, p15, http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/sites/default/files/pdf_files/rep19751100.037.051.001.pdf, accessed 19 October 2013.
[123] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Treason Trial records. Reference: AD1812, F21, Vol. 65, p. 13,917.
[124] Joan Grover, 'Legal Memories', *Black Sash 50th anniversary* pamphlet, 37 (7) (1995), p. 9.
[125] Interview with Lettie Malindi, Eulalie Stott, Noel Robb and Barbara Versfeld by Ruendree Govinder on 23 May 2005.
[126] *The Black Sash: The Earlier Days*, directed by Cassandra Parker, Nodi Murphy and Denise Ackermann (South Africa: Doxa Productions, 1992), DVD.

Transnationalism's role in creating the Black Sash and FEDSAW's relationship

Transnationalism also helped foster the relationship between the Black Sash and FEDSAW. Initially the relationship between the two organisations was one sided. The Federation, true to its aims of working with similar organisations, reached out to the Black Sash several times to collaborate in 1955. The Federation and the Congress Alliance were interested in collaborating with the Black Sash[127] in 1955 with some of its white members attending the Sash's organised vigils.

Unfortunately, earlier collaborations never transpired due to the Sash's organisational aims. The Black Sash declined joining FEDSAW's protests as they stated their constitution did not allow them to associate themselves with political organisations. The Federation believed that 'any woman's organisation that stood outside this struggle would stand apart from the mass of the women'.[128] Their exclusion of non-white women led to the assumption that they Sash was simply ignoring the larger issues experienced in society[129] and led to the opposition movement and the public being unsure where to place the Black Sash in the liberation movement.

The Sash was not part of the congress movement nor were they focused on bringing about change[130] through taking part in the wider liberation movement. While the Sash saw themselves as defenders of the 1910 constitution, the FEDSAW wanted to change and challenge apartheid legislation to become more inclusive and democratic. As such the Sash saw FEDSAW as being too radical in trying to create change, whereas the Black Sash wanted to preserve the constitution, making them more conservative.[131] The Sash regarded Joseph as an 'extremist for identifying with the non-white liberation movement,'[132] however this did not stop her from joining their forty-eight hour vigil. She attended this with Weinberg and Johanna Cornelius. Joseph represented 'non-white women if only through our presence'.[133] Notable

[127] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 174.
[128] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ab3, 'Federation of Women', p. 1.
[129] Joseph, *Tomorrow's Sun,* p. 64.
[130] Burton, *The Black Sash: Women for Justice*, p. 37.
[131] Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa,* p. 174.
[132] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC1368, B1.3, Women's vision foundation: Helen Joseph.
[133] University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Special Collections, Reference: BC1368, B1.1, Black Sash, Early history, p. 1.

leaders such as Joseph believed the Sash were also politically frustrated,[134] however rather than working alongside the liberation movement, they deliberately avoided it.

Despite this, there was overlap of women who worked with both organisations. Nancy Dick, a Black Sash member in 1955, expressed her interest in working with the FEDSAW in a letter of interest in March 1954, a month before the FEDSAW was created.[135] Additionally, Black Sash women took part in the Federation's historical event that took place on 9 August 1956, however no registrations were taken at the protest and if Sash members wanted to take part, they did it out of their free will rather than representing the Sash.[136] There was an unspoken relationship between the two organisations in the mid–1950s, and while it was not formally recorded in the Sash journals, some women were active in both organisations and wanted to be part of the national liberation movement.

The Sash's impact in the country was lower than that of FEDSAW due to being an exclusively white organisation, which meant the Sash reached a limited audience in a culturally diverse country, and they would inevitably face controversy over their membership criteria. The Black Sash were criticised for being a whites-only organisation in a racially divided South Africa, therefore contributing to white domination,[137] but at the same time some believed they were not banned in the 1960s because they were not seen as a threat to the government and were therefore labelled as a 'joke'.[138] This demonstrates that as white women, their impact in politics was somewhat questionable.

By taking part in the IAW conference and Pankhurst centenary, the Black Sash's perspectives about women's struggles and politics were challenged by anti-apartheid comrades, and by 1958 they were formally collaborating with the Federation. Working with the Black Sash, the FEDSAW wanted them to send a speaker to one of their demonstrations in 1958. 'We are confident that you will wish to join other women in this important protest against injustices.'[139] This signifies that women were becoming politicised and were creating their own movement within the national liberation struggle, which the Federation wanted to be all-inclusive.

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[134] Joseph, *Tomorrow's Sun,* p. 63.
[135] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: AD1137, Ac1.1, 'Conference to promote Women's rights', March 1954.
[136] Mary Burton interview with Monica Fernandes, Cape Town, August 2016.
[137] Michelman, The Black Sash of South Africa, p. 152.
[138] Ibid., p. 153.
[139] University of Witwatersrand, Historical Papers Research Archive, Reference: A1985, P1, FEDSAW correspondence. A letter from FEDSAW to the Black Sash, 26 July 1958.

By the 1960s, the Black Sash and the FEDSAW became more aligned in their aims. They both actively opposed legislation that was used to manipulate acts or demonstrations as so-called national threats, thereby justifying the government's penalties in the form of treason. These included laws such as the Terrorism Act and Sabotage Act[140] and the Group Areas Act where forced removals created 'black spots'. The Sash were also involved in helping individuals linked to the African Resistance Movement (ARM) when they were in detention, by bringing them food.[141] Young liberal supporters, who tried to sabotage the government through violent acts, such as bombing railway lines, created the ARM. It is through this collaboration, that one starts to understand that the Sash recognised the common goal of fighting against apartheid in unity with other organisations rather than in isolation.

Conclusion

Transnationalism had a profound impact on how the Black Sash and FEDSAW functioned in the late 1950s. It influenced leaders' attitudes and understanding of women's roles in fighting against injustices, but also encouraged a more flexible and open attitude that was focused on collaborative work and fighting against injustices in solidarity rather than isolation, whether at a national or international level.

Through their international experiences, events and exposure, the Black Sash and FEDSAW leaders returned to South Africa with more knowledge on women's experiences abroad and challenges they faced. This gave South African leaders more perspective on women's roles in anti-apartheid activism as well as more courage to address issues taking place in South Africa, integrating them more into the wider fight against apartheid with the reassurance they were not fighting against the government in isolation. FEDSAW's leaders, from as early as the organisation's inception, were politically active and were involved and interested in political collaborations. Alexander, Bernstein and Palmer all understood the importance of transnational links and how they would impact the Federation's support in fighting against apartheid and boost leaders' confidence, knowledge and courage in leading the Federation in this fight. The importance of transnational and national collaboration was included in the Women's Charter and the Federation's overall

[140] MacRobert, 'Forty Years–a Celebration', Black Sash pamphlet, 37 (3) (May 1995), p. 3.
[141] Robb, *The Black Sash and I: A Personal Memoir and Tribute to the Black Sash*, p, 69.

aims, and was entrenched in the organisation's functioning as a whole. The second generation of FEDSAW leaders, Ngoyi, Joseph and Tamana, went on to further represent South African women and the Federation abroad at conferences and events. These trips took place a year after FEDSAW was created in 1955, and helped prepare the Federation for the key political events that were to take place in South Africa in the late 1950s, while also giving the FEDSAW additional support knowing there were millions of international women who supported their cause.

By contrast, the Black Sash were involved in international events later, especially in 1957 and 1958, and were not created with the aim of political collaborations whether domestic or international. The Sash, under Foley's leadership, was focused solely on the Senate Bill and was not particularly interested in international dialogues related to justice or human rights. This changed under Stott's leadership in 1958, where the Sash created formal alliances with political organisations and created several initiatives to address the injustices of apartheid. Stott's inclusive approach was supported by Sinclair, who became president in 1961 and continued to integrate the Sash into the national liberation movement.

The international occasions both organisations attended helped clarify their purpose in anti-apartheid activism and in doing so, redirected their activities and aims. A year after these events, the Federation organised the largest protest against passes in South Africa in August 1956. The success of this protest made the Federation a vulnerable organisation, which was seen as influential and potentially dangerous by the government. This led to Joseph and Ngoyi being arrested for treason, alongside 154 other opposition leaders, for a trial that would last another five years. This hindered the Federation's political progress and activities, and meant Ngoyi and Joseph were no longer politically active as they were banned and restricted from any political activity and correspondence.

While the Black Sash was not accused in the Treason Trial, the trial alongside their involvement in international events in 1957 and 1958 helped the Sash create formal alliances with the Federation and other organisations. The Sash was invited to international events that were more focused on suffrage, an on-going issue women faced internationally. However, this exposure reiterated for the Sash that South Africa's situation was unique, and women's suffrage was not a priority when basic human rights were absent in South Africa. This realisation encouraged the Sash to confront apartheid and challenge the government, and create CATAPAW in

1957 with the FEDSAW, NCW and several other organisations. While CATAPAW was short lived, it contributed to the creation of Sash initiatives that would go on to become the Sash's legacy during apartheid: the advice office and bail fund. Both of these initiatives worked directly with communities in helping to empower the black population with education, financial and legal assistance against apartheid legislation.

Another event that would go on to further cement the Sash's role in collaborating with other organisations is the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 where violence erupted between the PAC protesters and the South African police. This resulted in a state of emergency being declared, and international pressure was placed on South Africa to abolish apartheid. The massacre further galvanised the Sash to work with the PAC, delivering food to townships that were under lock down by the police. Sash members were arrested, detained and imprisoned, a stark contrast to the kinds of legal activities they would take part in when first created.

Being linked to transnationalism and having made international connections and networks forced the Sash and Federation to re-evaluate who they were, what they fought for and their role in fighting against apartheid in South Africa. For FEDSAW, transnationalism helped reaffirm and reiterate their role in the national liberation movement, while for the Black Sash, transnationalism forced them to re-evaluate their roles in fighting against apartheid.

Conclusion

This thesis argues that transnationalism played a fundamental role in influencing and shaping FEDSAW and the Black Sash's organisational aims, ideological development and their role and contribution to anti-apartheid activism and the national liberation movement. The term *transnational* is defined and interpreted as the movement of ideas, networks, individuals and knowledge that transcends physical boundaries, and created opportunities that encouraged South African women to take part in global events and tours, sharing experiences and gaining support from international audiences and organisations. This concept was used in this research in order to explain and explore FEDSAW and the Black Sash's international networks and connections, and demonstrated South African women were contributed directly to a wider transnational movement.

Archival materials and evidence have revealed just how internationally connected these organisations were, and in themselves have embodied the concept of transnationalism by being located in different countries. Primary sources used for my PhD include archives based in South Africa, the UK and the Netherlands, as well as interviews of Black Sash members who were involved in the organisation since 1955. These interviews were used to help validate what was stated about the organisations in the archives, as well as clarify any gaps that were not addressed in archival sources. As an interviewer, I was concerned about whether the interviewees remembered the events accurately, and the role of memory when conducting interviews about historical events. The information from the interviews was cross-referenced with primary sources such as meeting minutes, correspondence and the organisation's publications, for historical accuracy and to further validate the information stated in the interviews. Additional first person accounts were used in the form of autobiographies and interview transcripts, which were used in conjunction with primary sources in order to give a broader and more personal perspective of FEDSAW and the Black Sash.

These interviews and first person accounts further enriched my study, and captured information about the organisations from a personal perspective. The interviews conducted as part of this study encapsulated Black Sash member's experiences about the organisation before they passed away, and helped clarify larger discussions about the organisations. The latter included whether the

organisations were linked to feminism in the 1950s and ’60s, and the extent of the Black Sash’s connections, and whether they saw themselves as transnational.

While the role of transnationalism in Black Sash and FEDSAW has not been studied before, its significance lies in the fact that it provides further insights into how South African women organised themselves politically on a national and international scale. The transnational approach provides a more modern history of South African women’s organisations and helps to clarify FEDSAW’s and the Black Sash’s organisational priorities; how they saw themselves in anti-apartheid activism; how far their networks extended; what kinds of international issues were they interacting with; and how their international links influenced FEDSAW and Black Sash leadership.

This study began by focusing specifically on the earlier years of the two organisations, in 1954 and 1955 respectively, in order to understand and contextualise how transnationalism was related to their origins and whether this influenced their aims, and how their international engagements shaped them further in fighting against apartheid. In doing so, the transnational framework demonstrates the organisations’ international links, shedding light on the types of dialogues both organisations were exposed to, which included fighting for world peace and advocating for human rights.

Transnationalism also illustrated the kinds of campaigns and organisations both the FEDSAW and Black Sash associated themselves with. The Federation aligned itself with world peace and human rights, through being affiliated with the WIDF from when FEDSAW was first created. This linked the Federation’s aims to similar organisations that fought for universal human rights in response to the wider international environment of the Cold War. The federation and Black Sash were not communist organisations but were influenced by the changing international environment, where international peace and cooperation became a focus. FEDSAW members further affiliated themselves with the WPC**,** which reiterated the Federation’s aims in achieving international peace.

In contrast, the Black Sash were connected to transnationalism through aligning initially with religious organisations such as the IDAMF, followed by organisations related to women’s suffrage such as the IAW and Pankhurst’s centenary, despite the Sash’s aims of not being related to these organisations. Therefore, the nature of transnationalism dictated the kinds of campaigns and

motives for international connections. For FEDSAW, transnationalism was an extension of their strategic aims and a continuation of Hilda Bernstein and Ray Alexander's legacy of being connected to international organisations such as the WIDF. By contrast, the Black Sash's transnationalism was a consequence of members' class status linked to white privilege, and the social circles they associated with.

A comparison between FEDSAW and the Black Sash is imperative to further understand the effects and impact of transnationalism, as well as to understand how South African women opposed apartheid. This comparison therefore helps to establish the differences and similarities of both organisations on an international and national level. FEDSAW and the Black Sash have rarely been compared due to their distinctive ideological stances, membership and organisational aims. However, comparing and contrasting both organisations has enabled this study to further analyse to what extent South African women were fighting against apartheid, and the comprehensive actions the Black Sash and FEDSAW took against oppression, in the form of local protests and campaigns. This comparison highlights how women were mobilised, nationally and internationally, in fighting against apartheid, regardless of their race or class. It enables scholars to understand the organisational aims, whether it be the Black Sash's fight to protect the 1910 South African constitution or the federation's fight for racial equality during apartheid, and where this fits within their ideologies.

The comparison between the two organisations has further demonstrated just how far reaching their networks and influences were; the origins of these networks; and the common issues they identified with their international counterparts such as women's struggles and human rights violations. FEDSAW were invited and took part in more international engagements compared to the Black Sash, in which Lilian Ngoyi and Dora Tamana represented the Federation in European countries such as the UK, Switzerland, Italy and Germany as well as China, Mongolia and the Soviet Union. Additionally, the Federation's collaborative approach with other South African oppositional organisations put them in a better position to work with their male counterparts in organisations such as the WPC. In contrast, the Black Sash was more isolated and had their networks contained in the UK, largely due to members such as Jessie Power settling in London.

Lastly, a comparison helps map the ideological development of both organisations, and to what extent they worked together on a national scale to unite women in fighting against apartheid. The transnational development of both organisations took place in different years, being 1955 for FEDSAW, and 1957 and 1958 for the Black Sash, which helps in comprehending at what stage they would have developed similar ideological stances in fighting against apartheid and for human rights. This is significant as it demonstrated their ideological growth and development, illustrating the impact of transnationalism on their organisations and their response to political campaigns and events, such as the Treason Trial and Sharpeville Massacre, thereby strengthening their position in the South African opposition movement to apartheid.

These transnational experiences and links directly influenced both organisations. Their transnational exposure had a profound effect on their leadership and political activities. FEDSAW leaders such as Helen Joseph and Ngoyi gained confidence and further motivation knowing they had global support for their anti-apartheid protests. After their international conferences and tours in 1955, the Federation went on to organise the largest women's protest and anti-pass protest in South African history in August 1956. By December that year, Ngoyi and Joseph were arrested for treason with an additional 154 opposition leaders from various political organisations and trade unions that challenged the NP's apartheid laws. The government saw them as plausible threats to the state and therefore needing to be tried and possibly detained for their role in anti-apartheid activism. Treason Trial records illustrated that Joseph and Ngoyi valued their international links and believed that working in solidarity was vital to achieving democracy and ultimately world peace. However, the apartheid government saw their international connections as a strategy to mobilise support against apartheid and therefore attempt to overthrow the government, thereby justifying the trial and interrogation for five years.

Transnationalism also had a positive effect on the Black Sash, where leaders too gained courage to integrate more into the national liberation movement. Their international experiences directly affected the Sash, where a new direction and organisational aims were updated. Foley's resignation as Black Sash president in 1957 coincided with the Sash's international presence at the IAW, and the organisation was thereafter led by Stott and Sinclair in 1958 and 1961 respectively. Both women believed the Sash's success was dependent on being an active part of

the liberation movement by creating formal alliances with other opposition organisations. This subsequently led to the Black Sash being more open to collaborations and creating initiatives that would directly work with black communities, helping them fight against apartheid.

This led to the formation of the CATAPAW, which came out of the necessity of fighting against passes that were proposed to be extended to black women; as well as other initiatives such as the advice offices and bail fund. The advice offices were created to give those affected by apartheid pro- bono legal advice about their rights against apartheid legislation, and the bail fund was created to bail women out of jail for violating pass laws. Both of these initiatives originated to aid the black population against the injustices of apartheid and illustrated just how integrated and proactive Black Sash had become in fighting against apartheid by working directly with communities.

The thesis also argues that FEDSAW and the Black Sash found inspiration from earlier South African transnational women's organisations. They used this form of inspiration in different ways. The Federation did it through literature and acknowledged Olive Schreiner in speeches and events, highlighting her support for a multiracial society with equal rights and women's empowerment in politics, as a way of encouraging women to continue the fight for an equal society. The Black Sash, who also looked to the past for inspiration, did so through the membership, specifically Daisy Solomon, of a younger generation of women to those who had taken part in the earlier South African transnational women's movement. While Solomon was not actively involved in the Black Sash protests, she was a guest speaker who would often motivate women in continuing the fight for justice. These role models highlighted the different transnational issues the Black Sash and Federation were connected to and how this would eventually be depicted in their ideological stance.

In addition to finding inspiration from past pioneers, FEDSAW and the Black Sash fought against similar forms of discrimination to their predecessors. The Federation fought against passes, also known as reference books, which were distributed to black men to monitor their movements. The threat that black women would be required to carry the passes emerged in the early twentieth century and led to the first formal black women-led protest. The Black Sash's purpose was aimed at fighting to keep the coloured population on the Common Voters' Roll after the

government announced ways of increasing the Senate by and removing voting rights from coloured people. The only coloured men able to vote in the country were in the Cape colony.

In order to focus on these purposes, both organisations used modern resistance organisations as motivation. The FEDSAW took inspiration from the 1952 Defiance Campaign. This campaign was a multiracial, multiparty campaign between the ANC and SAIC, and was a passive resistance movement that fought against apartheid and aimed to increase people's awareness of the brutality of the apartheid legislation. This campaign inspired Joseph and Ngoyi who would later become prominent leaders in the Federation. Similarly, the Black Sash were inspired by the Springbok Legion and its successor the Torch Commando, both of which were exclusively white organisations that defended the coloured vote when the government threatened to remove their electoral rights. Race and votes were the main themes that connected the Black Sash and FEDSAW to the earlier transnational women's movement and South Africa's political resistance in the 1940s and '50s.

Transnationalism also encouraged both organisations to redefine themselves to confirm their aims and aspirations, focusing them to shift their ideologies, which positioned them in the wider national liberation movement. Their ideological shifts challenged what the organisations thought of themselves and what their purpose in anti-apartheid activism was. Initially FEDSAW was created with the thought of being a feminist organisation, however members realised human rights in South Africa and racial discrimination were more prominent issues that needed to be addressed in the South African context, lowering feminism as a priority, when the majority of South Africans did not have basic human rights, simply due to their race. The Federation's ideological shift took place at their inaugural conference, where the Women's Charter was adopted, highlighting eight main aims that included collaborating with similar organisations to ensure all South Africans had equal rights, and collaborating with other organisations in fighting for world peace. As their purpose and aims were confirmed when organisation was formally created, the public and Federation members were not aware of the feminist ambitions Alexander had hoped for FEDSAW. Rather the public saw the Federation as an all-inclusive organisation, willing to work with other oppositional organisations regardless of their race or political affiliations.

Unlike the FEDSAW, the Black Sash's ideological development took place later in the 1950s and emerged due to a split in the organisation and their international engagement. The Sash always maintained they were an apolitical organisation who were not involved in party politics, despite their close affiliation with the UP, and organising and taking part in protests that opposed the Senate Bill, which proposed increasing the Senate and removing coloured voters from the Common Voters' Roll. By labelling themselves as apolitical, the Sash left the public and opposition organisations questioning where they belonged in the wider national liberation struggle and what their purpose was. By 1957, a split in the organisation emerged between Sash members who felt they had moved away from their original aims against the Senate Bill and should dissolve as an organisation; and those who believed the Sash should update their aims and fight against apartheid as a whole rather than focus on one single bill. The outcome was that the more conservative members, who had their minds fixed on the Black Sash's original aims of opposing the Senate Bill, left the organisation, resulting in a collaborative approach within the organisation.

These ideological shifts linked the Black Sash and FEDSAW's aims to the rest of the world. The Federation's international focus was an ambition set in their inaugural conference in April 1954 and with the adoption of the Women's Charter. The latter set out the Federation's eight main aims, with the last two explicitly linked to the international community and wider aims for world peace. This was a deliberate action on the Federation's behalf where global connections and collaborations were strategic and intentional. In contrast, the Black Sash did not make international interaction their aim but understood the benefits of it, particularly in hindsight where these interactions aligned the Sash with specific discourse and influenced how they would go on to further embed themselves in fighting against apartheid. The Black Sash's ideological shift also aligned with the UDHR, although this emerged later in its existence as the Sash functioned in isolation in its earlier years. Nonetheless, both organisations were exposed to and used their international links to help set their ideological stances and political activities. Transnationalism impacted both organisations and further defined their role in fighting against apartheid through encouraging further collaboration to strengthen the opposition front.

Through adopting a transnational framework, it became clear the fight for human rights connected FEDSAW and the Black Sash to the international

community, and would go on to link the two organisations by the late 1950s. The latter point made the federation and the Black Sash distinct from other human rights and anti-apartheid organisations in South Africa. Additionally they were the two dominant organisations for women and consisting of women only membership, that were independent from party politics and focused on collaboration for the common goal of racial equality and justice.

Despite their links to the international community on the basis of human rights and world peace, there was a lot of debate about the role of feminism and whether this was a motivator for the members in these organisations. This study clarifies assumptions from secondary literature that claimed the FEDSAW and Black Sash were feminist organisations as they were women's organisations exclusively for women, functioning within a patriarchal society. My study confirms the first wave of feminism was not a transnational connection that united FEDSAW and the Black Sash to the international community in the 1950s and '60s. Archival analysis of minutes from meetings, correspondence, interview transcripts and interviews, reiterates feminism was not an ideology either organisation adopted, as these women felt compelled to fight against racial discrimination and the wider issues of human rights being violated through the contextual issue of apartheid. Racial justice and human rights were their priority, rather than joining an international feminist movement. While FEDSAW's Women's Charter had a feminist undertone advocating for women's political and social rights, such as the right to education and employment, the Charter also stressed the importance of international collaborations and responding to the fraught South African political setting as a united approach with all male and female oppositional organisations. This Charter was not referred to again after the Federation's inauguration, although FEDSAW still maintained the objectives set out in the document including working with similar organisations with common goals. This led to the Federation contributing to the Freedom Charter and aligning themselves with anti-apartheid organisations in 1955. The Freedom Charter was a collective document, created by all opposition parties, setting out aims to create an idealistic democratic country.

In contrast, the Black Sash never created their own charter nor did they align themselves to the Freedom Charter, however by the end of the 1950s they openly supported the UDHR. Like the FEDSAW, rather than focusing on feminism, the Sash had a broader perspective on issues and concerns relevant to all South Africans.

Interviews with Black Sash members further confirmed what the archives alluded to, in that feminism was not an aim in the 1950s and '60s, but emerged in the organisation by the 1980s. Feminism was not the link between South African women and their international connections, but rather human rights, whether racial or women's rights, and the aim of international peace, were the commonalities the FEDSAW and Black Sash recognised in their international alliances. This created a transnational dialogue between the organisations and the international community.

The role of South Africa's transnationalism became apparent from the 1950s onwards. South African women became more involved in international conferences. The Black Sash attended and presented at the IAW conference and the FEDSAW presented at the WIDF event, the Congress of Mothers. They actively took part in these conferences, where they exchanged women's political experiences, country-specific political challenges, and discussed international issues that they could relate to such as women's suffrage and the fight for human rights and world peace. These conferences enabled women to network with like-minded people who shared similar challenges to those women and non-white people faced in South Africa. Power spoke to the IAW delegation, surprising the delegation that white women were also fighting against apartheid, where they previously assumed the white population supported apartheid. Ngoyi and Tamana in particular travelled to the WIDF's Congress of Mothers conference; they also took part in an Asian and European tour and were able to share their experiences and the challenges they faced as black women in South Africa.

The transnational exchange was also evident in the use of guest speakers at organisational events. The Black Sash were more focused on bringing in their contacts from abroad, either to speak at Sash meetings or write for their monthly publications. By contrast, FEDSAW members were guest speakers at international and national events, as opposed to inviting international guest speakers to speak at the Federation's meetings. FEDSAW members such as Joseph, Tamara Baker and Ngoyi would take centre stage and speak about pass laws and other apartheid legislation the Federation opposed, and share their experience and observations of apartheid. This was evident at the International Congress of Mothers and WPC.

Literature was an important part of both organisations' transnational influences. The FEDSAW and the Black Sash expanded their transnational influence through their publications. The Black Sash's journal, *The Sash* was sent to England

and distributed amongst women in the IAW while Mirabel Rogers's book about the Sash's first year of existence was sold nationally and internationally, with proceeds being donated to the organisation. Similarly, the Black Sash published articles in other pamphlets such as the UN's *World Goodwill* publication. By contrast, the FEDSAW's publications were more localised. Their published materials were present in South African oppositional organisations' publications such as *Advance*, *Contact, Fighting Talk* and the banned newspaper *New Age*.

Transnationalism helped both organisations and their campaigns in clarifying their ideological stance and role in anti-apartheid activism. FEDSAW's transnationalism was clearer partly because of the leaders who set up the organisation. There were clear aims from its inception, which could be due to the fact the leaders who set up the Federation had previous experience in other national and international organisations. Bernstein and Alexander also had international contacts and engaged more with world affairs and these international networks. One of the well-established networks was that of the WIDF, who provided many opportunities for the Federation to attend and represent South Africa abroad. The Federation was mostly represented by trade unionists, or workers who were street smart about apartheid laws and political issues women faced, as they had experienced this first hand. Because they were mostly lower to working class, they often could not afford to travel abroad and experience how women lived in other countries. So when the WIDF offered opportunities for a select few FEDSAW women to travel abroad, Gladys Smith, Ngoyi and Tamana were chosen to represent FEDSAW and South Africa. This was a valuable part of their experience and development as female leaders in South Africa. It was also a way of furthering their own contacts so they could continue the Federation's expectation and legacy of international collaborations for as long as possible.

In contrast the Black Sash, due to their class and education, were in a more privileged position, which was evident from their global links. The Sash unexpectedly had international elements where they represented South African women abroad in Pankhurst's centenary celebrations in London, while also attending the IAW's conference in Geneva. Whilst the Sash were not overtly fighting for women's rights or enfranchisement, it was unexpected to have them present at Pankhurst's centenary. They might have attended because they were in the vicinity, where they had a Sash member who lived in London or who could attend this at relatively short

notice. The fact they received an invitation for this event also demonstrates they had powerful contacts in influential organisations abroad.

They had the advantage of having past Black Sash members based all over the world; these were women who had left South Africa and settled in countries such as the UK, Australia and parts of Europe. This enabled the Sash to send representatives to attend international meetings on their behalf and openly discuss what the Sash were doing and expose their campaigns and fight against apartheid. With this said, the Black Sash's privileged position means they could have been more involved in international conferences, talks and have more dialogues with these women. The Sash were middle to upper class women with overseas contacts who worked in similar circles as British and European women's organisations. It is not surprising they did not take full advantage of their privileged position as the Sash were also unsure of where they fit in politically and what they were fighting for, unlike FEDSAW. The Federation's link to transnationalism was through similar organisational aims, although the founders, specifically Bernstein and Alexander, were connected to the WIDF through their political past and experience in the SACP and the FCWU.

Both of these organisations experienced the height of their international links in the mid to late 1950s. While the Federation responded specifically to passes and laws such as the Group Areas Act and Bantu Education Act in the South African context, the Sash were at times unsure what they were fighting against after the Senate Bill was passed. They were also responding to South African politics at a time where apartheid had already been implemented for a decade or so. This would affect how they would go on to represent themselves abroad and how they saw themselves in the South African liberation struggle.

By 1962, the activities of both organisations decreased due to harsher implementation of apartheid laws, and the banning of prominent leaders after the Treason Trial. After the trial, leaders such as Ngoyi and Joseph were banned from politics, while most leaders and members who were not arrested left the country in exile. The 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, the demonstration organised by the PAC, left the country in a state of emergency after the South African police force killed campaigners who were protesting against pass laws. These political events fuelled the opposition to operate underground and international connections once again became an important factor in the functioning of these organisations.

Transnationalism and international engagements helped reaffirm that women leaders and activists were not fighting against apartheid and other struggles in isolation, but rather were supported and had a large network of like-minded people to draw from. This gave leaders confidence to fight against apartheid and organise themselves politically that went beyond organisational boundaries. It also helped leaders confirm and refocus on the Black Sash and FEDSAW's direction and contribution to South African politics, and therefore helped reposition the organisations in the national liberation movement.

Transnationalism was present in the different generations of the leaders in both the earlier women's movement and within the Black Sash and FEDSAW. Transnationalism affected how they interacted and approached issues with race, as seen in the IWSA advice to the WEL, by advising them to remain racially segregated and advocate solely for white women's roles; but by the 1950s transnationalism seemed to unite organisations, specifically the Sash, in fighting against apartheid not as women's organisations, but as a wider national liberation movement. Stott and Sinclair from the Sash challenged their older perspective on isolating themselves from the national liberation movement and put forward initiatives to encourage collaboration, whereas Joseph and Ngoyi, who were both second generation FEDSAW leaders, had in place international connections with like-minded organisations such as the WIDF and WPC, which were willing to support the Federation's aims and endeavours.

The transnational impact unified FEDSAW and the Black Sash into wider anti-apartheid activism as women's organisations, as well as oppositional organisations that had different aims and demographics to start with, but ultimately fought for the same goals of equality and human rights. Transnationalism demonstrated that women in the Black Sash and FEDSAW were part of international dialogues, as they engaged with international themes such as suffrage and votes; the fight for racial equality; the need to fight for human rights and women's rights; and lastly the fight for world peace. This challenged preconceived roles of what women should or should not contribute to in politics in South African history. Their interaction with transnationalism also demonstrates new information about FEDSAW and the Black Sash's fight against apartheid, where both organisations' fight was not just on a national scale done in collaboration with other opposition organisations. Their influence and contacts were further reaching than what has been previously thought,

which ultimately shaped their own organisational purpose and ideological standing as well as their role and contribution to anti-apartheid activism.

Transnationalism had different meanings in South African history during different periods, reiterating its fluidity as a conceptual framework that responds to changing contexts. For example, transnationalism in the earlier South African women's movement was characterised by international tours, which helped spread organisational aims, increasing support and membership. These tours were related to organisations founded on the basis of religion as in the case of the WCTU, and suffrage as in the case of the WEL and WEAU. They were fundamental in the process of information exchange during these periods and helped unify women in solidarity, creating an international movement of women fighting for a common cause. There was the occasional talk abroad however international organisations and key individuals mostly came to South Africa to promote their organisations, increase support and membership. By the 1950s South African women were internationally active and took part in international conferences by giving speeches, contributing to discussions, sharing South African women's experiences and exposing the details behind apartheid legislation. Characteristics related to transnationalism changed in an environment focused on international conferences where world peace and wider human rights were the aims. These attributes reflected the changing political context internationally after World War Two and during the Cold War as well as South Africa's political development. By the 1960s, transnationalism's impact and influence re-emerged in a role reversal, where political activists left South Africa in exile and continued their political campaigns against apartheid from abroad. The flexibility of transnationalism emphasises the multiple directions transnationalism moved between women in the FEDSAW and Black Sash, organisations on a national and international scale, as well as across several countries. The flexibility of transnationalism also illustrated how South African women were part of a wider international community, despite being physically isolated through apartheid.

Throughout this thesis, transnationalism has helped to uncover the untold story of women's roles in anti-apartheid activism that contributed to the national liberation movement and not only their fight for women's rights but also their fight for all South Africans' rights. It is through this concept that scholars and historians can start to understand the full story of just how proactive South African women were,

both nationally and internationally, in fighting for justice. This gives historians a fresh perspective on the complex roles women played in the fight against apartheid during apartheid, but also sheds light on the two most dominant women's organisations in South African history during the 1950s. This transnational perspective further enables us to understand the complexity of South African transnational women's movements. The organisations that fought against oppression during the 1950s were in fact more organised, strategic and integrated in the national liberation movement and international dialogues than previously thought, examined or written about.

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