

SPEAK

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**FROM ONE SMALL JAIL
INTO A BIGGER JAIL
Women, detention and
restriction orders**

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SPEAK's Offices

We have offices in Durban and in Johannesburg. If you want to get SPEAK magazine, please write to the Durban address.

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SPEAK Collective members are Gill, Helen, Karen, Nise, Phumelele, Shamim and Vanessa.

The government's State of Emergency stops us from being free to write about many important things. If there was no State of Emergency, we would be able to write about these things.

Thanks

We thank those people who helped with this issue of SPEAK. They are Gill, Latiefa, Libby, Monica, Nana and Tinks.

The cover photograph was taken by Anna Zieminski, Afrapix. It was taken at a vigil organised by women's organisations. The vigil was held at St. Mary's Cathedral, Johannesburg to mark 1000 days of the State of Emergency, February 1989.

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They Will Give Forever the Flower of Courage

We remember with sadness those comrades who have been killed in this violent South African war. It is a war that brings us closer to justice in our country. But it is a very hard war, because we mourn every day the loss of another comrade and friend. The price of freedom is high. The struggle fought by those killed by the system is our struggle, and those who have died remain with us always in their brave spirit, giving us strength.

We share with SPEAK readers a very special poem. It was written for Samora Machel's first wife at the time of her death. The poem reminds us now of Samora Machel, Matthew Goniwe, Ruth First, Chris Ntuli, David Webster, Jabu Ndlovu and too many more. We hope that freedom will be won before any more dearly loved comrades and friends are killed by the system that causes so much hardship and so much death.

The Seventh Day

by Mutimati-Batnabe Joan

On the seventh day
A comrade died who will not be buried,
Who died and yet will perfume the air,
Who's dead, but will give forever the
flower of courage,
Who was from our family, yet nobody's
going to cry,
Who her comrades knew was
important, but not her,
And she will stay unburied because
she is a huge body
And there is not enough earth to dig her
grave.

And so it is
When someone grows to be the size of
the People
She stays unburied because she is
immense.
The Hero has no grave.



letters

Dear SPEAK

I have read your SPEAK 22. Actually this was my first time to obtain your thrilling magazine. In fact it has all what we as readers of newspapers and magazine buyers need to receive when reading an article in any newspaper or magazine. I say SPEAK go ahead with your way of setting the content of your magazine.

I will be more grateful to receive every issue of SPEAK. May you please send me the total amount which I need to pay. Or else write and tell me what I can do to receive this great work.

Your Thrilled Reader
Lucky Ngubane
KwaMashu

Dear Lucky, thank you very much for your praise for SPEAK. We are glad that you like the magazine. Please tell your friends about SPEAK! A subscription form is in the post to you.

Dear SPEAK

We have been getting SPEAK for over a year now and all find the articles useful and interesting. Our particular interest is in childcare and working women. Workers have won important victories in gaining Maternity and Parental Rights.

Are unions taking up the whole issue of subsidised childcare for workers? We see so many children in creches and preschools that have too few staff and too little equipment. Childcare workers earn some of the very lowest wages for the important work they do, because parents cannot afford to pay much.

If employers were to subsidise childcare, then workers' children would get a better standard of care.

We would really like more information about this if you or your readers could help.

Best wishes
Linda
Early Learning Resource Unit

Dear Linda, thank you for your letter. We are pleased that your organisation finds SPEAK useful. We are sending some information on this issue to you. We hope that other readers may also be able to offer information. Any readers who have information, please send it to: Early Learning Resource Unit, All Saints Parish Centre, 37 Denver Road, Lansdowne, 7764, South Africa.

I want to get every issue of SPEAK

That's great!

Here are our rates for 6 issues of SPEAK.

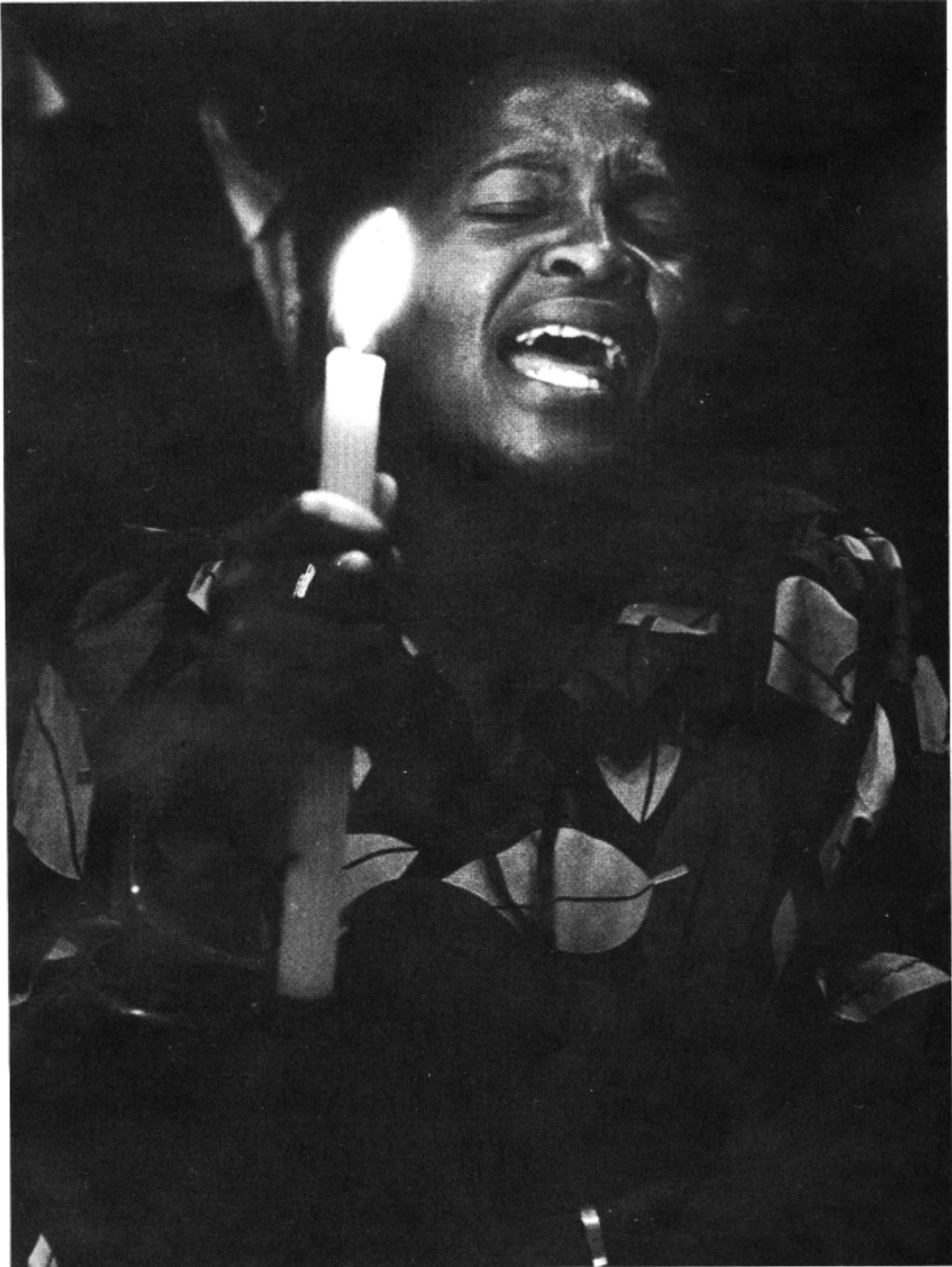
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**FROM ONE SMALL JAIL
INTO A BIGGER JAIL
Women, detention and
restriction orders**

I did not think that people could be treated like that

"I think it's having an effect on me now. I feel scared of people I don't know. I also can't bear people asking me too many questions. For the first two months I was interrogated daily. When people ask me questions I feel like I'm being interrogated again. I must try and overcome this feeling. It's important to let people know what I feel," said Veliswa Mhlawuli. Veliswa is one of the thousands and thousands of people who have been in detention. She is a journalist with Grassroots, a Cape Town newspaper which was recently banned for three months by the government for telling the truth.

The government does not allow us to write much about a person's experience of detention and interrogation. So we cannot write about all that we have heard about people's experiences in detention. This is what Veliswa said, "This was the first time I was ever detained. No-one could even imagine what it is like. It is a nightmare. I did not think that people could be treated like that." Veliswa was in jail for six months and is being charged. But at the time of SPEAK going to print she had not been told what the charges are. She is now out on bail.

Silencing the people

In South Africa today many people are kept in detention. This is the government's way of silencing the people who are part of organisations that want to see a better life for all South Africans. Men and women have been detained. Children have been detained. Grandmothers have been detained. The government has used detention for years to try and stop people fighting for their rights. Detention goes on today, and since the State of Emergency more than 300 000

people have spent time in South Africa's jails. Some people have been detained for days, some for months, and some for more than three years. Detention has broken up families, and in some cases left scars that will forever remind us of the suffering that people have endured in fighting for a free South Africa.

Is it different to be a woman in detention?

How do the security police treat women who are detained? It is clear that women get treated just as badly as men. They face isolation, torture, interrogation, and lies. But the police often use something more against women detainees. They use other dirty tricks. Thandi was detained for nearly a year, and released without being charged for any crime. She spoke about these dirty tricks. She said, "They try many ways to make you feel that you shouldn't be here. They say that you are here because you are irresponsible. You are here because your morals are low. They say all sorts of things to you. They use a lot of verbal abuse, you know, they call you 'bitch' they call you all sorts of things."

Detention is not a healthy place for anybody, especially not for pregnant women and babies

Detention is even more of a nightmare for women who are pregnant and who have even had to give birth in detention. The kind of food and special care that a pregnant woman needs is not to be found in jail. Daisy Matlou was a teenager when she was detained. Daisy was kept in the cells for nine months. She gave birth while she was in detention, and her baby spent the first five months of its life in jail. Did Daisy, her baby and her family have to be subjected to all of the worry, loneliness and pain? When she was released after all these months she was charged with keeping banned documents and she was given a suspended



Detention breaks up families. Here a detainee's mother speaks at a meeting for detainees' parents in Durban.

Photograph by Cedric Nunn

sentence.

Buyiswa Jack who worked for the Western Province Council of Churches as a field worker was also pregnant when she was detained. She was held for six months in detention. While she was in jail a fellow detainee was released. She told the family that Buyiswa was not in good health and was not receiving proper medical attention. Her family was very worried about her. Buyiswa has two children aged 14 and three. Buyiswa's brother Pro said that security policemen asked his mother for baby clothes two weeks before she was released. But then they brought the clothes back a week later. He said, "They did not even tell my mother how Buyiswa was or whether she had given birth already." Buyiswa's detention has planted some bitter seeds

for her three year old son. He used to tell people that the 'boers' took his mother away. He also swears at policemen patrolling the area.

A woman's place is in the struggle - not behind bars

Mothers bear the agony of their children's pain. Often young children do not understand why their parents suddenly disappear from their lives. Some children are old enough to understand if their parents are able to explain to them that they are being detained. But most often the police do not take any notice of such requests. So, sometimes the children of detainees just feel deserted. One woman who was detained spoke about her son. She said: "I felt quite strongly that he felt I had deserted him. And when he did finally visit, the visits were non-contact and I don't think he understood why I wasn't reaching out and touching him".

"They also bring into the whole thing your responsibility as a mother. In fact they say 'what kind of mother would leave their child on their own?' They make you feel guilty for being in jail whereas they put you in jail. I had a child already and that was my main source of worry and I felt quite guilty at times. But then later I would be convinced that I hadn't done anything wrong and, in fact, what I was doing would eventually benefit myself, my child and humanity," said Thandi.

A woman's needs

The security police and prisons officials can have a way of humiliating women detainees when they are menstruating. Thandi said, "I had to go without pads for quite some time because the police were saying, 'Well your lawyer should bring you your pads.' And in the meantime they were not arranging for my lawyer to bring me pads which meant that here I

was sitting with no-one to provide for me. I discovered when I went to see a doctor, later on, days afterwards, that in fact they are supposed to provide those things.”

The fear of rape

Thandi said, “There are specific kinds of torture that are applied to women. You have that fear the whole time that you can actually be raped. I had that fear when I was being interrogated when one of the security policemen actually suggested that the best treatment for me would be rape.”

The fear comes from the people who do the interrogating and the other people who come to the cells, like the S.A. Police, for example. Thandi said, “Because they can walk right into your cell and many of them understand that

you are in solitary confinement, that you are all on your own, that you are exposed to that kind of danger. They can get away with it. I don't think it is beyond them. You are totally on your own and totally at the mercy of these men who have the right to come into your cell anytime of day.”

Women detainees may not know that men do not have the right to come into your section without a woman warder with them.

Women's organisations are important

“I felt stronger and I think it was because of being in a women's organisation. I think I was better able to resist and even fight back because I understood the specific way a woman suffers in society and I knew this extended to the police,”



The joy of being together again. Georgina Adriaan (centre) hugs Dawn Elliot just after Dawn's release from detention. Dawn was detained for 11 months and Georgina for four months. No charges were brought against either of them. Photograph by Steve Hilton-Barber, Afrapix



Veliswa Mhlawuli said: "This was the first time I was ever detained. No-one could even imagine what it is like. It was a nightmare." This photograph was taken soon after Veliswa received bail.

Photograph by Rashid Lombard

said Thandi. "I feel quite strongly that women's organisations should prepare women for detention. It would do quite a lot of good if people shared their experiences so that if you are detained for the first time you would have an idea of what to expect but also you would have an idea of how to go about fighting for your rights."

Hunger strike

At the beginning of this year, when all attempts to be released from detention failed, many detainees felt that they had no other tool to use other than themselves. Some of the detainees who went on the hunger strike had been in detention for more than two years. They felt they would rather die than carry on forever in detention. Thandi went on a hunger strike when she was detained. This was some time before the big hunger strike that led to the release of many detainees. She said, "I myself went on a hunger strike when I was in detention. I had been inside for more

than six months. I felt that this was the only way in which I could demand attention especially because at this time I had gone through all the channels that they made available to you for my case to be looked at. Eventually I decided that I was going to go on hunger strike and I refused to take food. And somehow you feel it is your only instrument. You know that it is going to affect you. It is your body it affects, but you feel that you can use this instrument to fight. It's a way of fighting for your rights."

A larger jail - restriction orders

Thousands of people have been detained because of their struggle for justice. And the government has been forced to release many detainees because of the hunger strike. Many detainees chose death rather than face the possibility that they could be left to rot in jail all their lives. But there are still people in detention. And the government has made the lives of hundreds of ex-detainees very harsh by giving them

restriction orders. It is like going from one small jail into a larger one for restricted people and their families. The restriction orders are very harsh. Restricted people have to report often, sometimes twice a day, to police stations. They are not allowed out of doors for long periods. And in most cases restricted people have had to give up their jobs because they are not allowed to travel to work in the places they worked before their detention. Many families have lost breadwinners.

Joyce Mabudafhasi has been restricted. She is of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), both of which are now restricted organisations. Joyce is forced to stay in her home town of Mankweng. And she is not allowed to go onto the campus at Turfloop where she used to work. Her chances of finding a job in Mankweng are zero. Joyce is a widow. Her father died during her detention and her mother suffered a stroke. She has two dependent children. Detention, and the restriction order which followed it, have left her unable to provide for her family.

Joyce shares her home with Marie Stella Mabitja, another ex-detainee. They found that their friends were being searched and questioned by the police, who even warned them against visiting them. Joyce and Marie Stella are suspicious and worried. "We wonder why they want to isolate us from our friends. Already we are confined to the house. Apart from the child, we are all women. As long as we are isolated they can do anything they want to us," said Marie Stella.

And they are right to worry. Restricted people are turned into targets. Just recently, Chris Ntuli, a restricted person from Inanda, was killed on his way back

Restricted people can't tell the world what their lives are like, because most restricted people are prevented from speaking to the press. |

Solidarity

Thandi spoke about solidarity with other organisations. She said, "Solidarity with other women's organisations in the world is very important. I think it is very important to let other women in the world know what is happening to women in this country. This provides some kind of protection in the sense that these women write to the Minister of Police. I think that solidarity is very important. And you need assurance, really."

People who care

The government restricted the Detainees Parents' Support Committee in February 1988. This was a set-back for the many thousands of detainees, their families and their friends and comrades who need support and advice. But there are places where detainees, ex-detainees, and families of detainees can get support. Write to SPEAK if you want the addresses of these.

There are also useful booklets about detention.

Thanks to AGENDA, Joanne Collinge, Ayesha Ismail, Association of Democratic Journalist's newsletter, 5 W's and 1H, and to the all the brave women who have spoken out. We changed the name of an ex-detainee to Thandi. We thank her for speaking out. We look forward to a time when there are no more comrades in detention or restricted.

TAKING THE WOMEN'S

The Cosatu National Women's Seminar

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) held its first National Seminar on Women in March 1989 in Cape Town. Women from unions which are affiliated to COSATU were at this conference, and there were delegates from community-based women's organisations.

Women from the different unions talked about what they are doing in their unions to take up women's issues. They said that women in most unions are fighting for and winning better maternity rights agreements with the bosses. Women are also becoming more active in the unions. But delegates agreed that much more still needs to be done in fighting for the rights of women workers.

The women at the seminar made many important decisions that will help in taking women's struggles further.

They demanded that women must be represented in all COSATU structures. They say that if women make up half of the COSATU members then half of the COSATU leaders should also be women.

They decided that the national planning committee must co-ordinate activities that are being taken up at a local level in the unions.

The delegates said that campaigns must be launched around cancer of the cervix. They want to demand that bosses arrange regular check-ups for women workers for cancer of the cervix.

They also want education about cancer of the cervix and about contraception.

The delegates talked about what women's issues should be taken up in COSATU's Living Wage Campaign. They want to make sure that the Living Wage Campaign includes women's right to equal pay, women's right to buy a house and to get housing loans. They said that the issues of child care and violence against women also should be taken up in campaigns. They said that these campaigns should be taken up together with community-based organisations.

It was agreed that all COSATU locals should take up the same campaigns at the same time. As many of the locals are not working, the delegates felt that taking up women's issues might help to build the strength of these locals.

The women did not only discuss the fight against the bosses for their rights. They also discussed the fight within their organisations for women's rights. They felt that it was very important that sexual harassment be fought against. They said that men and women comrades in the union do not always set a good example. Sometimes they have casual affairs going on. The women discussed the COSATU Code of Conduct which sets out how comrades should behave in order to build the organisation in a strong way.

The women agreed that the casual affairs should be discouraged, and forced sex should not be allowed. In his speech to the seminar, COSATU general secretary, Jay Naidoo, said: Forced sex is rape and must be treated as a very



A woman's place is in her union. This photograph was taken at the Congress of SA Trade Union (Cosatu) cultural festival in Johannesburg in 1987.

Photograph by Anna Zieminski, Afrapix



serious crime in the struggle. No comrade, no matter how senior he is should be forgiven for such a crime. He should be isolated from the struggle.

COSATU women are looking at the chains that keep them down. They are picking at each link in the chain, making them loose, slowly and surely, making them free.

Left: A woman's work is never done. Men should share the load. This photograph was taken in Lamontville, Durban in 1986.

Photograph by Pax Magwaza, Afrapix

A visit to the Soviet Union

Three South African Women went to an international children's conference in Zimbabwe where they met women from the Soviet Women's Committee. The Soviet Women invited them to visit their country. For the South African women it was a dream come true!

Photographs by Gill de Vlieg



New things are happening in the Soviet Union. The Soviet people are reaching out to people of other countries with a new openness. And in the Soviet Union itself there is "perestroika" which means people taking back their own power. It means the leaders must account for their actions to the people, and that people work for a true democracy. There is an awakening of the sense that each person is important and must be able to play a part in shaping their own, and their country's, future.

SPEAK talked to one of the women activists Gill, from South Africa, who took up the invitation to visit the Soviet Union. The Soviet women wanted to hear about South Africa, but they also wanted to tell about themselves, their lives and their struggles. "The Soviet Women's Committee is very involved in working for peace throughout the world, and they are also fighting to prevent nuclear war. They are fighting for women's rights in the Soviet Union. It was part of the new Soviet policy of openness, called "glasnost", that led the Soviet women to invite us to visit and to share in their lives," said Gill.

The women in the Soviet Union face many problems still. The marriage laws allow for equality between men and women. But men still think that they are better than women. So the problem of the double load for women has not changed. Gill said, "In fact, one woman who was the prime minister of one of the Soviets, had to resign her job because she had teenage children who needed more attention." Shopping is a big thing to do. There are no supermarkets. There is a different shop for each different thing. So you have to queue up to choose something and queue again to pay, and

* Continued on page 14

Right: Two Soviet women from Karelia offer a traditional welcome of bread and salt to the South African women.





then to collect it. And you have to do that at all the shops for the different things. And since the double load hasn't changed, it is the women who have to do all this.

There are no supermarkets. There is a different shop for each different thing. So you have to queue up to choose something and queue again to pay, and then to collect it. And you have to do that at all the shops for the different things. And since the double load hasn't changed, it is the women who have to do all this. The Soviet women are fighting for equality. They are speaking with louder voices for their rights. Many women are very active in social pensions, culture, health and welfare in local and regional government.

Soviet children get very special treatment. Gill said, "There are places called 'pioneer palaces' where children go after

school. Here they learn different skills like puppet making, dancing, gardening, and weaving. These 'pioneer palaces' are provided by the government. There are health resorts for the young pioneers. During the school holidays children go to these resorts. For example, children with a health problem, like chest problems, will all go to a resort where they will get special care." And there are pre-schools for the little children. These are also run by the government.

Gill said: "It was such an exciting world to visit. It was exciting to be able to talk and to share with Soviet women. I realised how many things unite women, and how easy it was to talk because women throughout the world have so much in common, just by being women. The problems that women face as women throughout the world makes a bond between them."

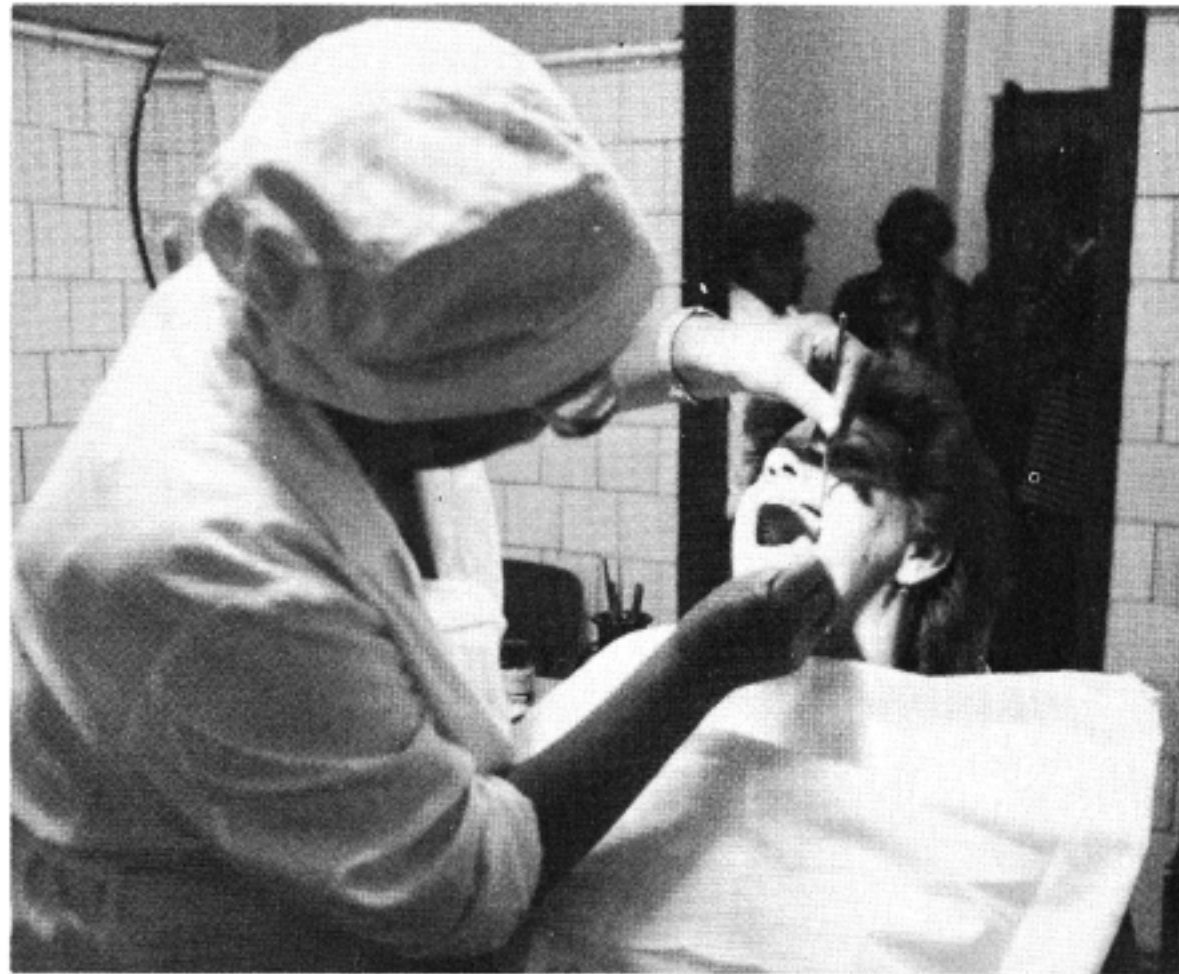


Soviet
pione
African



Left: A woman weaving on an island in the Karelia province.

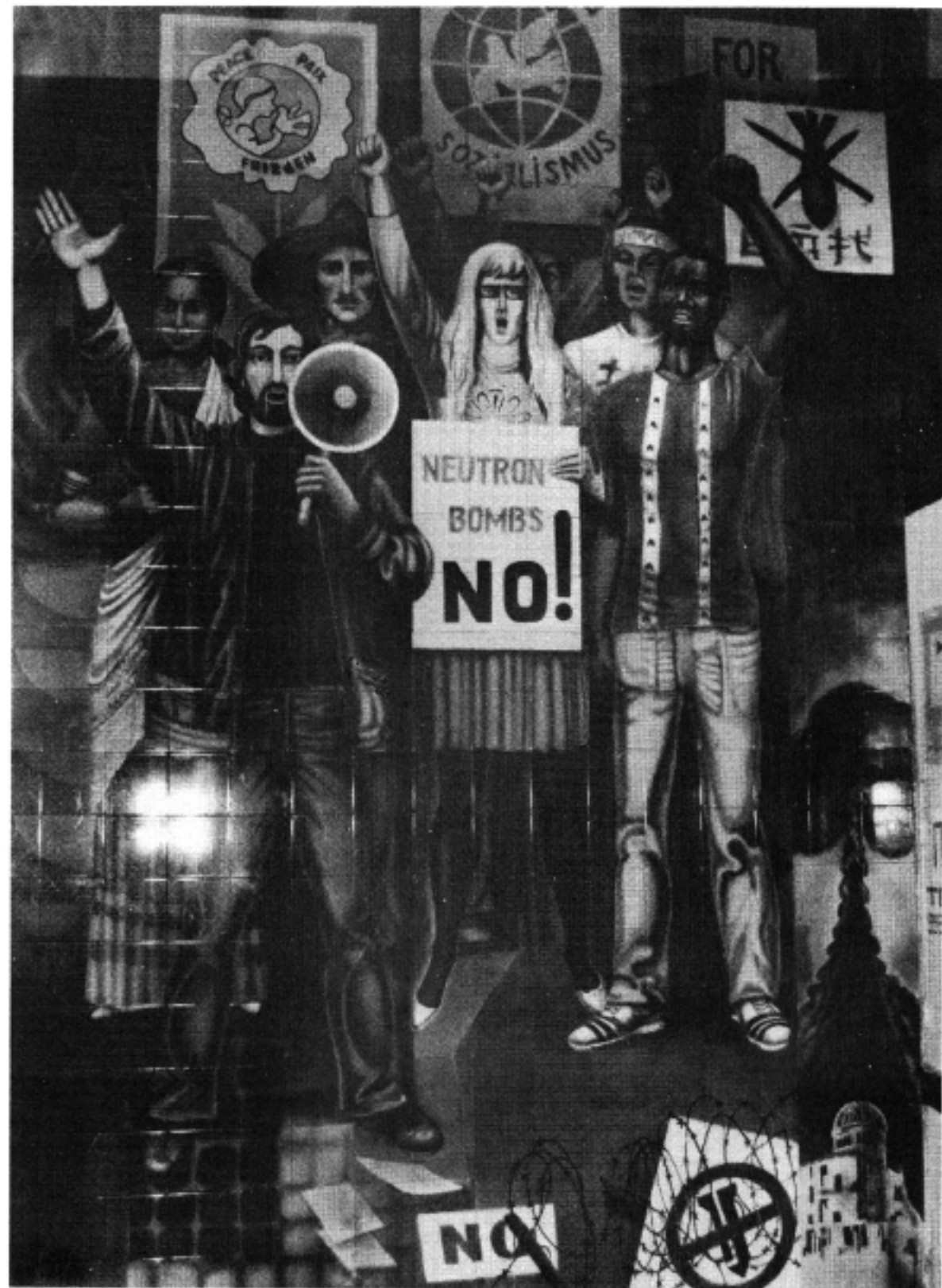
Right: The Soviet Women's Committee is very involved in working for peace throughout the world. They are also fighting to prevent nuclear war. This painting was done by Soviet youth.



Most of the doctors in the Soviet Union are women. The South African women visited a maternity clinic in Moscow. All the staff there are women - nurses, doctors and dentists. Very good care is taken of pregnant women. And special care is taken of a woman's teeth during pregnancy.



Children get special care. Here some youngsters were very excited to meet their South African visitors. This photograph was taken in the Friendship Room of a "Pioneer Palace".





Women performing at the cultural festival organised by Federation of South African Women in Cape Town in May 1989.

Photograph by Eric Miller, Afrapix

Welcome Back Alex Five!

Welcome back Moses Mayekiso, Mzwanele Mayekiso, Obed Bapela, Richard Mdakane and Paul Tshabalala! Their trial started in January 1987, and has just ended, in April 1989, with the freeing of all five. Moses, who is the general secretary of National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, was detained in June 1986. The trialists were refused bail until December 1988. So the trialists and their families have had to go through very difficult times for something that even the courts did not see as a crime.

The five were accused first of treason. This was for their part in setting up "alternative structures" such as street committees, people's courts and other organisations in Alexandra township. That charge was dropped. The charge was changed to sedition. But in April after a long hearing the judge set the five free. He said that support for the five leaders, the Alexandra Action Committee and the rent boycott was a form of protest against conditions in the township and what people saw as the corruption of councillors. It was an attempt to upgrade living conditions, not to make the township ungovernable.

Chris Dlamini, COSATU's first vice-president said: "COSATU and the United Democratic Front were also on trial in this case and the court has now ruled that our fight for freedom is legal."



The Garment and Allied Workers' Union (GAWU) and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union of South Africa (ACTWUSA) are on the road to forming a massive new union which will have about 200 000 members. They will join COSATU. What is very exciting about the new union is that the majority of its members will be women. This means that there should be more participation by women in all COSATU structures. And women's issues are sure to be given more attention. A woman's place is in her union!

Photograph by Chris Ledochowski, Afrapix

300 000 March in Support of Women's Right to Abortion

More than 300 000 people from all 50 states of the United States of America came together in a march to support women's right to abortion. Abortion is at present legal in the United States of America. But people are worried and angry that the abortion laws may change. And these changes may prevent women being able to have safe, legal abortions. Most of the people on the march were women. Some of them were famous film stars. Many of them carried coat hangers, or pictures of coat hangers. This was to remind people of the horror of the backstreet abortions that happen when abortion is not safe and legal. Where many women lose their lives or are damaged for life because they are forced to use things like sticks and coat hangers to end their unwanted pregnancy.

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Lerato's Father Goes to the Mines

by Stella Stevens

"Ma! Where is father going to?" asked Lerato. Mother was packing his clothes into a suitcase.

"Your father has to work in the gold mines in Johannesburg," Lerato's mother replied. She spoke with sadness in her voice.

Lerato's father had been out of work for many months. Her mother only earned a small sum of money from doing washing which she had to fetch from the town. Lerato knew why her mother was not happy even though her father had now found work after such a long time. The money he would get would help to buy the things they needed to live.

"Johannesburg is far away, my child. We will miss your father in the home," said Lerato's mother.

"Will he bring us some of the gold?"

"No. The gold belongs to the white man. But your father will be able to send us money now and again for food and our needs. I will have to go to the post-office to collect the money."

Her father explained to Lerato that he will live in a big hostel where many other miners will also sleep. Miners were from many countries around South Africa. It would not be comfortable but he would earn some money, at least.

"I will miss you both," he said.

"But," Lerato said, "I know why mother is unhappy about you going. My friends at school tell me that it is not safe for

workers in the mines. There are many accidents because the bosses do not see to it that it is safe for the miners when they go down into the pits. I would not like anything to happen to you, my father. Nompumelelo lost her father and Kagiso lost his uncle in the mines last year."

Lerato's father was surprised that his daughter knew about the Kinross mine disaster that took the lives of 122 miners. He was unhappy that she talked about it when he was about to leave.

"The bosses gave Nompumelelo's mother a lot of money. I don't think there could be enough money to pay for a human being, do you, father?" asked Lerato.

"No, I don't think there could be," her father said thoughtfully. The next day, Lerato and her mother had to take her father to board a train to the Golden City. The station was packed with excited miners. But Lerato could not help wondering how many of them would not return. They sacrificed their lives to make the bosses rich.

When father's train left, Lerato cried. Her mother tried to hide her face, but Lerato could see that there were tears in her mother's eyes. Lerato closed her eyes and wished with all her heavy heart that her family could live together.

STATE OF EMERGENCY

by Nise Malange

People are dying everyday
Old and young the same
Father, mother the same
Boys, girls the same
Adults or young ones the same
State of Emergency

The roads have been closed no entrance
Funerals are restricted no entrance
Father, mother are banned
Boys, girls are banned
Adults, babies its the same
State of Emergency

Only limited movement is allowed
Freedom songs are banned
Freedom clothes are banned
They choose their own priests
State of Emergency.
Time is limited
Five minutes for a funeral
Five minutes to bury you
That's your funeral
State of Emergency

What's happened
Who has died?
It's government, soldiers, it's question, reply
It's an oppressed black Africa
We have no place for burial
No place to live
State of Emergency

Tomorrow the shacks are built
In the early morning the bulldozer enters
Today the shacks are destroyed
Today the shacks are burnt
There is no place to live

Today the Squatters and Slums Bill
Tomorrow it's LTA and Urban Foundation
Only those who got money got houses

Today its Mix Marriages bill is abolished
Tomorrow it's Group Areas Act
Mix marriages got problems
Law of apartheid is there

It's Group Areas, Squatters and Slums,
New Labour Bill, election of the councillors
That's the State of Emergency.





A May Day rally in Johannesburg, 1986.
Photograph by Paul Weinberg, Afrapix

“Many organisations today - the youth, the students, civics, and the UDF - recognise the importance of promoting women’s rights. They have all adopted resolutions and policies to further the women’s struggle. But when evaluating these efforts, we find that little progress has been made. We must ask ourselves why this is so.

Women and the Living Wage Campaign

A booklet
from Cosatu

“Men must listen to women, they must hear what women’s problems are. We must teach each other, and together we must find the answers. But most of all, we must be honest when we evaluate why we have not achieved our goals.

We must tell no lies and claim no easy victories.

“In the 1980’s our struggle has reached new heights. Our people are determined to be free. But, comrades, the yardstick by which we measure how far our struggle has advanced is whether we are taking forward the women’s struggle”.

These words open the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) booklet called ‘Women and the Living Wage Campaign’. They are the words of Zeni Tshongweni from Federation of Transvaal Women (FEDTRAW).

The book looks at women in COSATU. It looks at the problems women workers face, and it shows how important it is that women’s struggles be part of trade union struggles. The booklet says that the Living Wage Campaign cannot succeed without women taking a big part in the campaign. It asks the question - how can we make sure that women join the fight for a living wage? It says that things important to women must be taken up in the work place, and that women’s demands must be put to the bosses.

The booklet shows that women in COSATU are starting to take up women’s struggles. At the first COSATU Women’s Congress in March 1988, women asked that certain demands affecting women be included in the Living Wage Campaign. These were demands about sex discrimination, maternity benefits without broken service, training and promotion for women workers, rights for domestic and farm workers, and that women’s struggles be remembered in campaigns for June 16, Sharpville Day and May Day.

The booklet gives information on the problems that women workers face. There are questions at the end of each section that can be used by groups in discussions and workshops. The booklet has different sections. It looks at women as breadwinners. It talks about how women are always in low paid jobs, and how women work a double shift. It explains tax deductions and how this affects women. It talks about maternity and parental rights agreements and what workers should demand. The book talks about many more things, like childcare, women’s right to education and training, job security, and the demand for decent housing and an end to hostels.

The information on these areas is useful because these are things women need to have information about if they are to take up their struggles in the workplace. These are also things for men to hear so that men and women union members can together find the answers.

The book does not look at how far COSATU has gone in taking up these issues affecting women workers lives. But what it will do is to raise awareness of the things unions need to look at to make sure that women are involved in unions and that women’s issues are taken up. It is true for COSATU also that “the yardstick by which we measure how far our struggle has advanced is whether we are taking forward the women’s struggle”.

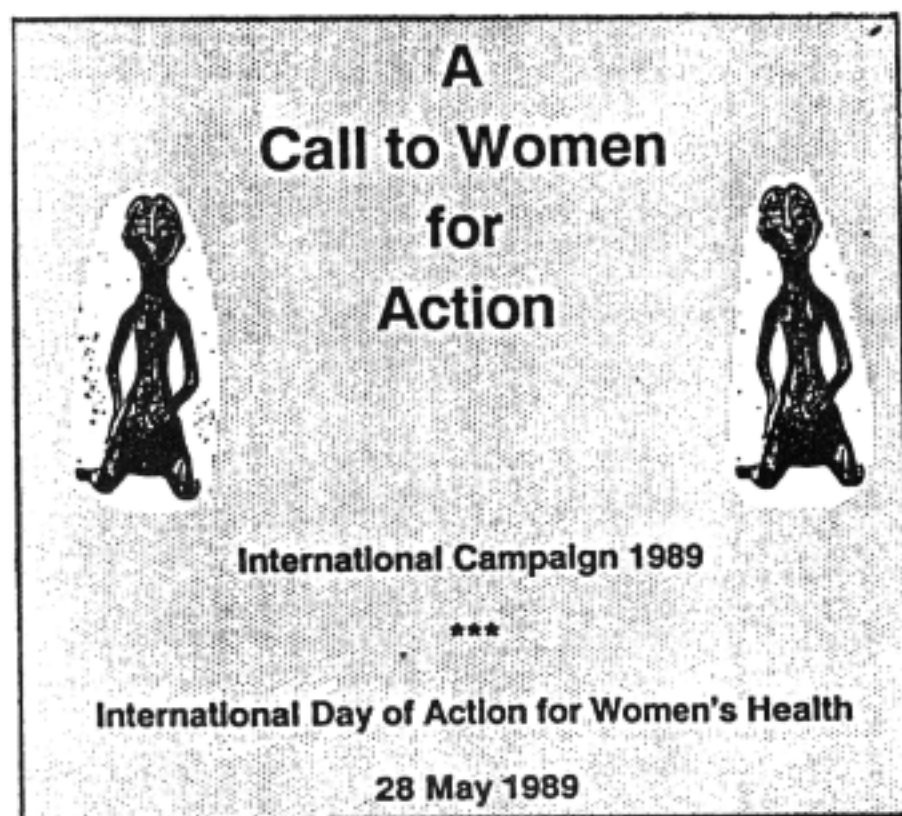
**This booklet costs R3.00. If you want to buy a copy write to:
The Sales Department
COSATU Head Office
P.O. Box 1019
Johannesburg
2000**

or ask any regional COSATU office.

International Day of Action for Women's Health

In 1987, 28 May was declared "International Day of Action for Women's Health" at a conference in Costa Rica. The conference was attended by women from many countries all over the world. The women at this conference decided to give attention to the very serious health problems that women face. They said that many millions of women die each year from child birth, pregnancy and abortion. This is especially so in the poorer countries of the world, as well as in the poor parts of rich countries. The women at the conference said that women must come together to fight for better health services and an end to women dying in this way.

The South African Council of Churches (SACC) Women's Division, and the Division for Home and Family Life, held a meeting to mark "International Day of Action for Women's Health". The meeting was held at the Presbyterian Church in central Johannesburg. This meeting focused on cancer of the cervix and pap smear tests. A doctor, Katrien Dehaek, spoke about the serious problem of cancer of the cervix. Of all the different cancers, she said, more women were affected by and died from cancer of the cervix. There is no cure for this cancer but it can be prevented if women have regular pap smear tests. This test shows if the cancer is about to start. If it is noticed early, before the cancer has actually started, it can be stopped. But if it is left too late, women die from it. Women need to be informed about this cancer and about the pap smear test. And they must demand that hospitals do pap smear tests. Most hospitals for black people do not do them.



The women spent much time discussing the poor health services for black people in South Africa. Mardulate Tshabalala, who is on the National Executive of South African Health Workers Congress (SAWHCO), told the meeting that women's groups and community organisations must demand better health services. She said that health is our right. Lulu Xingwana, from the SACC, said that the Transvaal Provincial Administration has stopped providing pap smear tests and that women were being left to die.

The women at this meeting decided that it is time to take up this issue. They decided to hold meetings with more and more women to educate and inform them about cancer of the cervix, and about the

If you want to find out more about the campaign, write to Lulu Xingwana, SACC Women's Ministry, P.O. Box 4921, Johannesburg, 2000. And if you want to find out more about the "International Day of Action for Women's Health", write to Women's Global Network on Reproductive Rights, NWZ. Voorburgwal 32, 1012 RZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Dear Doctor



Dear SPEAK Doctor

Some time ago I had this bladder problem. I always had this feeling of a full bladder, but when I tried to go to the toilet only a little bit of wee came out. And it was painful and burning. I went to the doctor who said I have a bladder infection called cystitis. He did not tell me how it happened or what the problem is, and I would like to know. I believe lots of women get this problem. And I am scared I might get it again.

Yours,
Confused

Dear Confused,

Thank you for your letter asking about cystitis. You are right, lots of women do suffer from this uncomfortable infection. Cystitis is an infection of the bladder. The bladder is the bag that holds the wee (urine) before you go to the toilet. The main cause of the infection is from germs from your bottom (anus) getting into your bladder. These germs make your bladder sore inside. This makes you want to wee every few minutes. It burns you even though only a few drops or even nothing may come out. You may see blood in your wee, and it may look cloudy. Other things can also start an attack of cystitis. They are things like wearing clothing that is too tight, alcohol, tea, coffee, too much sugar. Some women get mild cystitis just before their period.

You feel pain above your pubic bone, and sometimes pain over your kidneys and back. There may be a bad smell from your wee. If this happens you should go to a doctor. The doctor

will ask you to wee into a small bottle. She will test your wee with special strips of paper that show whether there is an infection or not. She may send your wee away to a laboratory to be tested. You will be given tablets to clear the infection. It is very important that you finish all the tablets, otherwise the infection will come back. You should feel better in one or two days. If the tablets do not help, you should go back to the doctor.

A lot of women do get cystitis more than once. If you get cystitis often, there are some things you can do to stop yourself getting this infection. Drink lots of water every day. This makes you wee a lot and stops the germs getting into the bladder. Try and work out if there is anything you eat or drink that seems to make the cystitis feeling start. Some women find that tea, coffee, alcohol or spices start an attack.

When you wash, make sure that you keep your private parts clean. Wash with a mild soap. After you have been to the toilet, make sure that you wipe yourself from the front to the back. This helps to stop germs from your bottom getting into your bladder. Some women find that having sex in some positions starts the cystitis attack. Their bladder often feels uncomfortable while they are having sex. Try not to have sex in these positions. It may help if you wee before and after you have sex.

If you feel the cystitis coming, then try having a hot bath, or putting something warm, like a hot water bottle, on your tummy. Drink lots of water. Try to stay off tea and coffee. There is a medicine you can get from the chemist called Potassium Citrate. You mix it with water and drink it. It will probably help to take some of the burning feeling away.

If none of these things help, you must go to the clinic or doctor. It is not good to leave it without treatment because the cystitis germs may spread upwards to the kidneys.

I hope that you get better soon. Cystitis is very painful we hope you don't get it again. Best wishes!

The SPEAK Doctor

Do you have a health problem? Write to the SPEAK doctor. She will answer your letter. Remember to send an address with your letter so that she can reply to you.

My baby is born

How will I feel after the birth?



Photograph from 'Our Bodies Ourselves'

"It felt very strange when my baby was placed in my arms. I was not sure what to do. Suddenly I was completely responsible for this little person. For its food, its comfort, its life. I wasn't sure if I could cope with this great responsibility!" said one woman SPEAK spoke to.

After your baby is born there are many changes in your life. Your body loses its pregnant shape. You have a tiny baby that depends on you for everything. Everyone around you also has to get used to the new baby. Sometimes you may feel really happy. Sometimes you may feel really sad or tired. It is easier to get used to your new life with your baby if you are prepared for all these changes. In this article we talk about many of the things that happen to you.

How Long Will You Bleed For?

After you have had the baby and the afterbirth (placenta) has come away, you go on bleeding from your womb (uterus). This bleeding sometimes lasts a few days or it can go on for a few weeks. To begin with there is a lot of red blood, but slowly the blood becomes brown and gets less. With this bleeding come afterpains. These are contractions of the womb. The contractions help to squeeze the blood out of the womb and to make the womb go back to its normal size. The contractions may be as painful as labour pains and are worse when you breastfeed. You may need to take some panado for these pains. The pain lasts for only a few days.

Sometimes germs can get into the womb

after you have had your baby. The bleeding may get heavier instead of getting less. It may have a bad smell. You may get a fever. Both of these things mean you have an infection in your womb. You will need to see a doctor. She will treat you with antibiotic tablets for this infection. It may also mean that a piece of the afterbirth has been left behind inside your womb. If this has happened you may need a small operation to scrape the afterbirth out. Always tell your midwife or your doctor if you get these problems.

Is It Painful to Have Stitches?

Many women have their babies without needing stitches afterwards. Some women may tear when giving birth and will need to be stitched afterwards. For other women, a cut may be made at the opening of the vagina just before the baby's head is delivered. This makes it easier and quicker for the midwife or doctor to deliver the baby. Before you are cut you are given an injection of anaesthetic to stop you feeling the pain. After the baby is born, stitches are put into the cut, your legs are hung up at the side of the bed and you are given more anaesthetic. You should not feel any pain when the stitches are being put in. But when the anaesthetic stops working, the stitches may become painful. One woman said, "My stitches were sore and I bled every time I went to the toilet. I was very worried. I decided to ask the doctor about it".

What Can You Do To Make The Stitches Feel Better?

Get a bowl and fill it with warm water and a handful of salt. The warmth helps the pain and the salt stops germs from getting into the stitches. You can do this several times each day if it helps you. The stitches heal after one or two weeks. They are disappearing stitches

and do not need to be taken out. If germs get into the cut it takes a longer time to heal. There is a bad smell and often the stitches become very painful. Tell the doctor or midwife if this happens.

When Can You Have Sex After Your Baby has been Born?

Different women feel different things about sex soon after having a baby. Some women are happy to have sex very soon after the baby is born. Other women do not want to have sex for months or even years after the baby is born. Other women would like to have sex but the stitches may be too sore, or they may be too tired to enjoy sex. Women who are depressed may not be interested in having sex. So you see, there is not a rule about when you can or cannot have sex. It depends on you and how you feel. Your partner should understand and respect your feelings.

One woman said after giving birth, "I'm glad my husband saw the birth of our child. Now he won't insist that I must have sex so soon after birth when my stitches are not yet healed and I am so sore."

If You Don't Want Another Baby Again Soon, When Can You Start to Use Family Planning?

Many women's periods do not start for several months or even a year after the birth of the baby. Breastfeeding keeps the periods away and so helps to stop you from getting pregnant. But you cannot depend on these natural things. It is possible to fall pregnant a month after giving birth. If you want to be sure of not falling pregnant you must use some form of contraception like pills, or a loop, or condoms. You can start taking pills straight after the baby has been born. But you must talk to the clinic about what the best kind of contraception for you would be. All contraceptives have good and bad

sides to them.

When Can You Start To Breastfeed Your Baby?

Many women think they have no milk straight after the baby is born. This is not true. As soon as the baby is born there is milk in your breasts.

If you gently squeeze your breasts you will see a small drop of milk coming out from your nipples. This is very special milk called colostrum and it comes from your breasts for the first two days after the birth. Colostrum is a little bit brownish-yellow in colour. After two days your breasts suddenly become very large and painful. This is a sign that the ordinary breast milk has come into the breasts. Ordinary breast milk is white and watery and tastes very sweet.

One woman told SPEAK, "I thought my breasts had done all the growing they could while I was pregnant. But when the milk came they grew much bigger and they were very sore."

Breast milk is very good for babies. It makes them grow well and stops them

from getting diarrhoea or bad coughs. In the next issue of SPEAK we will talk a lot more about breastfeeding.

Does Every Woman Feel Happy After Having a Baby?

There are many different feelings you can have after your baby is born. Some women see their babies for the first time and become very happy. Other women feel nothing to begin with, but their feelings change and grow with the growing baby. Two days after the baby is born, a deep sadness affects some women. They sit and cry for hours, although they don't know why they are crying. This is called the 'baby blues.' These feelings usually pass after a day or two. But some women may go on feeling sad or depressed for weeks or even months after the baby is born. They often feel very bad because they think they ought to be feeling happy.

If you feel this way, try not to feel ashamed of your sad feelings. You are not to blame for them. Talk to a nurse, doctor or someone you can trust about the way you are feeling. Sharing your sad feelings often makes you feel better.



This exercise helps to make your tummy strong again.

First of all, lie on the floor, with your legs bent.

Then lift yourself forward, and hold onto your legs. This will make your muscles tight.

Lie down again. Then pull up again.

Try and do this a few times each day.

Why Do Doctors Examine Babies After they are Born?

Every mother's first question when their baby is born is: "Is it alright?" Some problems that babies are born with will be clear to the midwives and to the mothers at birth. The doctor will check the baby from top to toe. If anything is wrong they will decide on the best way to treat the baby.

How Can You Make Yourself Strong Again After You Have Had Your Baby?

When you are pregnant your body changes shape in many ways. A lot of fat grows over your bottom, your legs and your breasts. Your abdomen is stretched by the growing womb inside you. Your vagina is stretched as the baby is pushed out. It is not surprising that your body feels different after the baby is born. Our abdomen is round instead of flat. You are fatter than you were before you got pregnant. Your vagina is larger, so that sex with your partner feels different. The stretching of your vagina sometimes makes the muscles that stop you from weeing very weak. This means that wee comes out if you cough or sneeze. What can you do about all these problems? The answer is simple. You can do exercises. Here are some pictures showing you what kind of exercises you need to do. If you have had a Caesarean Section, the muscles on your tummy (abdomen) have been cut and are very weak. Start to strengthen them by breathing with your tummy. Do not breathe with your chest, which is the way you usually breathe. Keep your chest wall still, and move your tummy muscles in and out.

The Examination Six Weeks After You Have Given Birth

Many women are asked to go back to



their clinics for a check up six weeks after they have given birth. This is to check whether your blood pressure is not high. They also check that your womb is going back to its normal shape, and that the bleeding has stopped. They also want to check that your stitches are healing well. And they check your baby from top to toe again to make sure that she is getting along well.

A Wish For A Happy Life

There are so many changes that happen when you have a baby. Your body changes, and your whole life changes. You have to get used to caring for this small person who is a part of your life forever. SPEAK would like to wish all new mothers and those who are about to become mothers a happy life with their babies. And we also wish for all these new babies a future South Africa where there is good housing, health, education and happiness for all no matter what the colour of our skin.



June is the month of the children and youth. June 16 is a day written in blood on our calendars. June 1 is International Children's Day, a day on which the rights of children are remembered. A day of hope that one day South African children, and the children of the world will be able to live happy lives.