

Who are You?

by Roseline Naapo

Who are you?

I am a woman

Who bears the children

Who brings the children up
in this country.

What is your profession?

I've got one important role to play
not a profession

I am a mother.

My children are doctors

nurses, academics, farmworkers
of this country

Ministers of Parliament, soldiers and police,
to name a few
and I must be brave.

Why must I be brave?

When my child is forced to overwork himself

When my child is made a slave

When my child cannot decide for himself

When my child is forced to join the army

and fight for the country where his rights
are not respected

When my child is turned into a dog
that bites the hand that feeds it.

I must give support

I am a woman

Who builds the nation

Who is not afraid to shout

Forward to the freedom of my children.

I am a woman who marched to
Pretoria on the 9th August

I am a woman

Who is still fighting

'Cause I am a brave woman.

My offspring are stronger than me

for they have sucked fertile milk
from the breast of a brave woman.

In poverty and richness and in war

I am still a woman

and I'll remain a brave woman.

My role shall never be changed

I am a woman

Who is not afraid to shout

Forward to the freedom of my children!

Forward to the people's liberation!

Forward to the freedom of our country!

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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 Johannesburg office.

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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: Latiefa, Libby, Nana, Mary and Nomvula.

The cover photograph was taken by Afrapix. The drawing on the back cover was done by Shelley Sacks.

Sorry

We forgot to say that the back cover drawing on SPEAK 24 was done by Sanna Naidoo. And thanks to Nombuso for help with SPEAK 24.

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Letters to SPEAK



Dear SPEAK

Could you kindly send me SPEAK, but I've got no money and I am a child of 14 in Std. 8. I like your books very much because they give us a clear picture of what is happening. And they tell the truth. I think one day I will be there and be one of your agents. I wish I can succeed in spreading truth all over South Africa and I wish you good luck. Viva SPEAK. You can't kill the spirit. We will go on and on. You can't kill the spirit. Amandla!

From

GS

Butterworth, Transkei

Dear GS, we are very glad that you think SPEAK is a good magazine. We are sorry that you don't have any money. We would like to suggest that you sell SPEAK in your area. Perhaps you can make a little bit of money in this way, as well as spreading SPEAK to more and more people. We hope to hear from you again soon! SPEAK Collective

Dear SPEAK Collective

Rape Crisis Cape Town has enjoyed receiving SPEAK magazine. We think SPEAK is the best thing since the government lost the struggle!

Thank you for a reader friendly, informative magazine.

Your in Sisterhood

Eytle Karro

for Rape Crisis

Dear sisters, you've made our day! Thanks!
SPEAK Collective

Dear SPEAK Collective

I am reading about your magazine from Learn and Teach. I realise that this SPEAK magazine is for women. As I am a woman, I am interested in it.

Please send me your magazine every month. I would be happy if my asking will be answered. You mention that "No people can be free until the women are free." I want to know about this magazine. If money is requested I would pay for it.

Yours

Shirley Ratsoma

Mohlorekoma Location

Dear Shirley, thank you for your interest in SPEAK. We will send you a subscription form off straight away. And we look forward to hearing what you think about SPEAK. We hope you will share it with others, and encourage people in your area to write to us!
SPEAK Collective

A Job in Early Childhood Education

Woz' Obona Early Childhood Service Group helps community groups to work together to understand and meet the needs of young children. This work includes training adults to give good care and education to pre-school children.

An employee is needed to join the service group to work as a team and share in all parts of the work. Applicants should:

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Send to: Woz'Obona, P.O. Box 248,

Judith's Paarl, 2045. For more information phone (011) 6144392. Closing date: 14 October 1989

Domestic Workers Say No to Slavery

SADWU's Legislation Campaign

On 1 June 1989 domestic workers all over South Africa made the demand that the government introduce laws to protect domestic and farm workers. Workers and representatives of their union, SADWU, went to the offices of the Commissioner of Manpower in Durban, Cape Town, Eastern Transvaal, Northern Transvaal, Johannesburg, East London, Port Elizabeth, and Bloemfontein. The workers gave in a written list of recommendations to the Commissioners' offices. They also gave in petitions signed by thousands of domestic workers calling for laws to protect domestic and farm workers.

They Had the Spirit and Some Were Very Militant

Workers in Johannesburg held a meeting before they went to the Commissioner's offices. Margaret said: "We were very proud that so many domestic workers came. They braved the weather and came. They had the spirit. And some were very militant. We chose three to hand in the demands. The office was too small for all to go in. There were about 200 of us. The Commissioner said he was not the boss. He said that the boss is in Pretoria. So he will send the memorandum to the Minister of Manpower in Pretoria." In all centres the local Commissioners agreed to forward the memorandum to the minister. At the time of writing this article, SADWU had not heard from the minister in response to their memorandum.

The Most Oppressed

Domestic workers and farm workers are the most oppressed and most exploited of all workers in South Africa. They are not protected by any laws and employers can therefore pay them and treat them as they please. SADWU is the union that organises domestic workers. Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU) has begun organising farm workers. Both unions are affiliated to COSATU and work together. Margaret from SADWU told us: "We take up demands for



Photograph: Paul Weinberg

Margaret Nhlapo

"Employers must realise that the slave trade was abolished a long time ago. They should not treat domestic workers as slaves." These are the words of Margaret Nhlapo, who works in the offices of the union for domestic workers, South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU).

farm workers whenever we campaign and FAWU do the same for domestic workers."

Margaret does not think it will be easy to win the demand of laws. Margaret, and many other women working at SADWU's offices, worked as domestic workers before they came to SADWU. And they have been fighting for many years. "We were in the backyards", said Margaret. "We came out of the backyards to run the union. We have been fighting for laws since 1981. I don't think it will be easy to get legislation. It is not a short struggle."

Until there are laws to lay down wages and working conditions SADWU will organise domestic workers to fight for a better life.

Organising Domestic Workers

SADWU organises domestic workers so that they can take up demands with one voice. Often workers come to the union after many years of hardship. Margaret said: "She comes to us after she has had enough for so many years in one family. She comes and joins. And she pours out everything. I ask: 'Why did you bear all this for so long?' She says: 'I thought they would change.' She reaches nowhere so she comes to the union. She wants to create a platform, a negotiating space. We talk to the employers. Some we can't change. Some come around."



Photograph by Omar Badsha

Working in Durban as a domestic worker.

SADWU tries to reach out to employers so that they will understand the demands the union is making. They make contact with employers of all races through the workers that come to them. SADWU is also preparing an open letter to all employers of domestic workers which they will send out to newspapers. SADWU's job is not easy. Without laws, it is the goodness of the employer's heart that will decide how the worker is treated.

Domestic Workers are Humans, After All

"Our demands are not only related to white employers, but to black employers, that is, African, 'Coloured' and Indian employers as well. We feel strongly that the life style of domestic workers is breaking families. They have no human rights like giving love to their children. Their children are neglected. A mother can't bring up her child as she would like to. You will only see your child after another year. The child doesn't know you. You are a stranger. That should not be happening. We are humans after all."

SADWU's Demands

SADWU has set down certain minimum demands for domestic workers. These include contracts between employer and worker, a living wage, pensions, UIF and other benefits, and an end to child labour.

SADWU Demands Contracts

SADWU demands that employers and workers should enter into a contract. Margaret said: "As much as domestic workers benefit from it, employers will also benefit. We are working on a draft contract which endorses our demands." These contracts can be used by workers and employers to set down wages and working conditions. Until these conditions are made into a law, it will still be up to each worker to make demands with the help of their union, and it will be up to individual employers to decide if they want to agree to these conditions.



Photograph by Pax Magwaza

Domestic workers on the move in Durban.

The contracts will include a set wage, hours of work, pension, leave, and other benefits. It will also include a reasonable notice time in the case of termination of employment.

SADWU Demands a Living Wage

SADWU demands that domestic workers should be paid a decent wage and work reasonable hours. Margaret said: "Domestic workers are still getting paid as low as R50 and R80 a month, which is disgusting. It is disturbing when you think that a worker is not just working for herself. Even if she was, she would not go far on that money.

"We are demanding R450 a month for skilled workers. That is those who look after small children and who can cook or bake or have worked for a long time and know their jobs well. Some people train a domestic worker and then they don't want to pay because they say 'She was blank when she came, I taught her everything.' Even if she is trained by the same employer she is skilled and should be paid as such."

"We are demanding R350 a month for semi-skilled workers. And these demands are for a five day, 40 hour week. For casual work we demand R3.50 an hour."

SADWU believes that if employers cannot afford these wages they should not employ domestic workers.

SADWU Demands Pensions

SADWU demands that employers provide for pensions. Margaret said: "Pension is a far cry. After people worked 40 years for one employer they walk out the same as they came in - with nothing. We are highlighting it to employers that they should obtain a pension for their employees. Some employers are willing but don't know how they can go about it. Others think the state pension is enough to live on. But it is only worth a week's groceries. It is worth nothing. So employers must start looking at obtaining private pension schemes for domestic workers."

SADWU demands that employers should register their workers with a pension fund, and the employer and worker should pay towards this fund.

Unemployment Insurance and Other Benefits

SADWU demands that domestic workers should be covered by UIF. This will allow workers to be covered by unemployment insurance so they will receive some money in times when they are unemployed.

SADWU also demands that the employer must register the worker for workers' compensation benefits. The employer should provide decent accommodation with hot and cold running water, and electricity, if a power source exists on the property. Employers have a responsibility to make sure workers get proper medical treatment when necessary. Overtime work should be paid for. Workers must be given one month's notice of termination of employment, or one month's pay in lieu of notice. SADWU demands that workers should have the right to join any union of their choice.

SADWU Demands an End to Child Employment

SADWU demands that children under 16 years of age should not be employed. They have come across many cases of child

labour. Margaret said: 'It is ridiculous. This happens especially among Blacks - that is 'Coloureds', Indians and Africans. A woman employer will fetch a child from the parents. The parents, because of their situation, let her have the child. She will pay the parents R25 or R35 a month. And she won't give it every month. She will say 'I am helping the parents.' But if she wants to help, she must send the child to school. These children are more exploited than workers in white homes. They sleep in the kitchen, and they can't go to bed unless every one else is sleeping. They are not allowed out of the house. They can't play. They don't know where they are. They get lost. We are mothers. We come from rural areas, and we know our children are being taken by people from the towns.' Sometimes social workers from the townships send such children to SADWU. There were recently two children sent. SADWU organisers looked after the children until they were able to send them back to their parents. "The one child was 15 years old. She had bruises on her back. She had the phone number of the school where the woman worked and of the shop where the man

worked as a salesman. We got them to the office. The woman refused to send the child home. I said just give her the money to go home."

Join the Union and Fight Alongside
SADWU's message to domestic workers is to join SADWU and organise. Margaret said, "Domestic workers should join the union and fight. We should not tire. And more important we should fight now because of high prices and rising costs of living. Legislation is important because if we have some legislation, domestic workers lives can be controlled and there would not be so much exploiting."

And until there is legislation SADWU will continue to fight and to demand that employers pay the wages and meet the conditions set out by the union. The message to employers is clear, "Employers must try and treat domestic workers as mothers, as housewives. They should realise that the slave trade was abolished a long time ago. They should not treat domestic workers as slaves. Domestic workers are human beings."●



Photograph by Pax Magwaza, Afrapix

The union makes us strong! SADWU at the Commissioner's office in Durban.



A Swapo rally in Namibia

Photograph by Gill de Vlieg

NO-ONE CAN STOP US!

Namibian women speak out about their struggles, hopes and dreams

Namibian women are strong women. They have suffered through a hard and bitter struggle. Namibians have been killed and maimed and their land and crops have been destroyed in the war against South African oppression. Namibian women have experienced all these things. And like women in other wars, they have suffered rape as well. Namibian women have been part of the struggle and fight for freedom.

Freedom is Coming Closer

Freedom for Namibian women means freedom from the South African oppressors, freedom from the South African Defence Force and freedom from the war which has

touched every woman's life. With independence, people will no longer have to live in fear. They can begin to rebuild their lives which have been torn apart for so long. For Namibian women, this freedom is a precious dream. With the return of those in exile, people feel that the peace they fought for is at last coming closer.

One Namibian woman said, "Each family has someone coming home. We are all preparing for them. I am waiting for my daughter. Every day I go to Dobra to wait. Our lives will change with their return. Our lives will be better". Dobra is a camp outside Windhoek where returning Namibians go.

Every Woman Has A Story To Tell

Every woman has a story to tell. They are sad stories. But through their sadness, each woman is made strong. Many years ago, Rosalie's father was a long-distance driver. One day he disappeared. No-one knew where he went. One day Rosalie received a letter from her father. He said that she should not be afraid and that he would be back. This was twelve years ago. "I am now hoping he will return but I don't know when this will be," said Rosalie. Rosalie's sister is returning from Cuba. She has been away for ten years. "She is coming home so we can help each other," said Rosalie.

Other women are less certain about their family members who have been in exile for so long. Marianne talks about the fears that many women have, "We are worried for their lives. There has been no contact. You hear along the grapevine of where a brother is or of where a sister is. It is hard to know what has happened to our family. Some may have been sacrificed".

From the beginning women have fought side by side with men for Namibia's freedom. There are women soldiers in the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). There are women leaders in the structures of the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO). There are women who are organising in the trade unions. There are women organising for the elections. They go from house to house to talk to the people about voting for the new government.

Women are proud of their fight against the South African government. They want to fight to get rid of South African domination. They also want to fight for better working conditions and better lives for all Namibians. And they want to fight for a better life for women. As one Namibian woman said, "The women must stop just sitting at home in the kraal mashing maize. They must stop taking the backseat".

Loide Kasingo is an organiser and education



Photograph by Peta Scop

Frada Kahanga (left) has been fighting for freedom in Namibia for many years.



Photograph by Gill de Vlieg, Afrapix

A fighting spirit in Namibia at a SWAPO Rally!

officer for the National Union of Namibian Workers' (NUNW). As a woman she has had to work hard to convince others that her involvement in the trade union is serious. She is organising a domestic workers' union. She believes that a SWAPO government will support this union. Loide says that in the trade unions, although men believe in equality between men and women, men still don't have confidence in women as leaders. She said, "Within SWAPO there is no apartheid against women and SWAPO Women's Council will push for the position of women to be improved. Women have been fighting hand in hand in the struggle and, given time, will be able to have more leadership positions."

We Must Be Leaders

Frada Kahanga has been a SWAPO activist for eighteen years. "I just went in and fought," she said. For two years she was SWAPO Women's Council chairperson and is very clear about what she believes the role of Namibian women should be." The women of Namibia must be educated. We must educate ourselves, we must be leaders. As women we stand for freedom for Namibia. As women we have fought for it - shoulder to shoulder with our men and with our children - daughters and sons. As women no-one can stop us." Frada has always been a domestic worker. She is very strong about her position as a worker. She says: "I am a worker in this land. I am important as a worker. We have been trampled as domestics and now we must rise."

Women workers have never had full rights under the South African government. Many people believe that without the oppression of South Africa things will change. They believe that the doors will open for every woman to participate in decision making. And that women will have more control over their lives. Namibian women are fighting for these changes.

Women Are Also Workers

Marianne is an administrator for the unions. She also believes that a SWAPO government will mean changes for women. Marianne is concerned with the position of women workers. She says: "Women are also workers, and are also oppressed as workers. The union is important for women as it is a place to solve their problems." Marianne says there are other problems that women workers face. Most of them face a day working for others and then they have to work at home cooking, cleaning and looking after the children and husband. Many husbands don't want their wives to be part of the union as it takes the women out of the house. "My dream is that we as women will be part and parcel of everything."

Full of Hope

Women have many hopes and dreams for the new Namibia. Most women believe that with a SWAPO government, their struggles, hopes and dreams will come true. With the liberation and independence of the nation, women want to unite to further their own struggles. Most Namibian women are full of hope for the future. They look forward to the changes which they hope will come. For those women who believe in a SWAPO government and its policies their struggle is halfway won. Namibian women realise that society's attitudes towards them as women must change. In order for women to be free, a strong and united women's voice must be heard.

"The women's struggle is one which women take themselves. Women must stand up and fight for their own rights. No-one is going to fight for them. We must stand together as one body. We must speak together as one body. And we must hold a SWAPO government to its constitution. We have to change things for ourselves as the women, and to change the society, women have to organise together. Women must stand together as sisters to work against the discrimination they suffer. We must stand up against sexual harassment and violence against women," said one Namibian woman.



"We have had much difficulty as women. The boere and our own men give us trouble. It is hard. But we as women have something to offer. We are part of how to free the land," said another woman.

One woman said, "I dream that the future will have different ways. We have been fighting for better lives and this better life is now beginning. My dream is to build the community, to see many employed - to start from the ground and build up from the roots. We all dream about living in peace. We dream about peace in the land, so we can bring up our children without fear. So that we can have happiness in our lives".

Frada Kahanga, a SWAPO activist, has a message for the women of South Africa. She says, "As women no-one can stop us. We will fight until South Africa is gone. We will fight until South African women are free. South Africa must also be free. South Africa is the last place. We will stand by you until the bitter end, as Angola helped us. We will also join the army there by the Orange River".

This article was written for SPEAK by Peta Scop. We would like to thank all the Namibian women who spoke about their dreams and hopes for the future. We salute them in their fight for freedom, justice and democracy. And we look forward to a time, when, through their efforts and ours, South Africa will also be free. ●



SWAPO guerillas. Women and men fought side by side in the army.

Photograph by John Liebenberg, Afrapix.

Namibians Return to their Country

Thousands of Namibians are returning to the land of their birth after years of exile.

Reception centres have been set up where those returning stay before going on to their homes. Fikile Mazibuko works for the South African Council of Churches in the Home and Family Life Division. She went to visit one of the reception centres.

"Dobra is about 17 kilometres from Windhoek in Namibia. It is a Catholic Mission Station under a beautiful mountain. At the moment, it serves as a reception centre for the people of Namibia who are coming back after years of exile. There are men and women standing on the outside of the fence. Some are chatting to people inside the fence. Others are looking. They look with hope and tension. They are looking for their beloveds."

A Warm Welcome

"We enter the centre after producing the necessary identity cards to the two UNTAG gentlemen at the gate. They are polite, with no-nonsense faces. We are met by warm smiles from the children and young women who are standing in the sun near the cars and tents. Susie, a young pleasant girl of about 15 years, comes running in our direction. She greets us, and chats a bit. She is one of the young women who are working within the centre. She dashes back to her work."

Serious Work is Going On Here

"As we walk in the yard I begin to feel the mood of serious work in the centre. There is a mood of determination and love. There is a spirit of teamwork. I am struck by the healthy



Photograph by Mbaka Hilisa

The joy of returning home.

and clean looking babies and children who are walking and playing around. These are children of the returnees.”

“A lively man who has seen many rains emerges from one of the tents. He greets us, shakes hands in a very warm manner, and takes us around the centre. The centre is managed and administered very well. Records are kept in an orderly manner. The amount of effort, skill, and vision put into running and managing the centre is amazing.”

“The atmosphere is friendly, warm and secure. Women and men are doing some domestic chores around the family tents. There is a bus waiting. People are boarding it. It is not heading for an unknown destination. People are being assisted to go to their homes. Back to their families, loved ones, their children, and communities. Through the 3-R programme, and other church structures, relatives and friends are traced before returnees are sent to them.”

They Want To See It Succeed

“Sister Nashilongo is one of the dynamic women who are part of the 3-R programme. She is responsible for the overall co-ordination of commodities and for ordering equipment and material. She relates with the

UNCHR office on matters relating to the returnees, and communicates with the centre manager on the stock. But most of the staff managing and assisting with managing at the centres are returnees. These are skilled people. Amongst them are teachers, administrators, qualified health workers. Those working here are committed to what they are doing. They are working long hours. They are working hard. They want to see it succeed.”

As I watch all of this, the reality of receiving returning exiles dawns clearly in my mind. I turn around to Sister Nashilongo, and I say: ‘This is a very engaging ministry. Keep up the good work sister.’ She softly says: ‘You are next.’ Indeed she is right.”

The Special Needs of Women

“At the clinic we find three returnees and their babies. Babies are being fed with very clean bottles. We exchange greetings of welcome back home. Sister Nashilongo explains, in her committed way, that she is making efforts to get things like sanitary towels for the women at the centres, as well as baby nappies and other basic things. She is aware of the special needs of women and children.”

“We salute the children, youth, mothers, girls, and all the people of Namibia, who have been deeply committed to the struggle of Namibia. May the road to liberation and independence be filled with the spirit of human rights, children’s rights and other human liberties.”●

Do you have a story
to tell, or news to
share? Write to SPEAK!

Write to: SPEAK Collective, P.O. Box 19375, Dormerton 4015
Durban, South Africa.

WOMAN'S DAY

SPEAK went to some of the celebrations of this year's National Women's Day in Johannesburg and Durban. We heard the voices, music, dance, plays, poems, and speeches of many South African women. Workers, community activists, church women, students, poets, health workers, women's groups, veterans of the women's struggle, and youth - all added their voices. It was a National Women's Day that raised many issues concerning women and the future.

Women, You Can Make it Happen

At the Natal COSATU Women's Forum rally in Durban, the message was clear - "Women, you can make it happen," said Sister Bernard Ncube, president of the Federation of Transvaal Women (FEDTRAW). "You are the workers. How can your boss tell you what to do when he eats from your own sweat?"

At the same meeting, a shopsteward from the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union of South Africa (ACTWUSA) told the meeting: "A lot of women take a back seat in the struggle and don't fight for their rights." She said that often men do not allow their women to take part in the struggle. And this allows the bosses to win. She said: "Our men must allow us to participate in the struggle and then the bosses won't win so easily."

And a shopsteward from the Garment and Allied Workers' Union (GAWU) said: "Comrade women - your place is not in the kitchen, your place is in the struggle!"

The Flower Hall in Jo'burg Saw the Women Make the Day

"Maqabane gijima nawe, maqabane gijima nawe, comrades run with us, comrades run with us." This was the loud, excited welcoming song that met Helen Joseph



Photograph by Pax Magwaza, Afrapix

A performer from the play "You Have Struck a Rock" presented at Natal Organisation of Women's August 9 cultural evening in Durban.



Photograph by Jeeva Rajgopaul, Afrapix

Women workers from GAWU present a play about their factory floor struggles.



Photograph by William Matatla, COSATU

when she arrived at the August 9 celebration organised by the Federation of Transvaal Women (FEDTRAW) in Johannesburg.

We Will Unite All Over South Africa

Helen Joseph was one of the women who took the petitions to Strijdom in 1956. She told the story of going to Strijdom's office with all of the petitions that women had signed opposing passes for women. She said that there is still a long struggle ahead. And that strong women had to be strong and united in order to win the struggle. We are not allowed to quote Helen, as she is restricted by the government.

All Women are Health Workers

A speaker from the South African Health Workers' Congress urged women to get involved in community health programmes. She said: "Traditionally our women are health workers, irrespective of health training, because they care for their families, mothers, brothers, fathers and children." She also spoke about the problem of apartheid health. She said: "The government has taken away the yearly pap smear from us. With the pap smear you can prevent cancer of the cervix. As women, we are being overworked in so many ways. We end up having abortions. As health workers, we feel that we must do something about these things." She said: "FEDTRAW and health workers' organisations should make a



Photograph by Anna Ziemiński, Afrapix

Top: Helen Joseph arrives to a comrade's welcome!

Above: Women from Tafelkop in the Northern Transvaal perform at the FEDTRAW rally.

Right: A lively spirit at the Flower Hall!

Photograph by Anna Ziemiński, Afrapix



campaign to bring back from the government those pap smears."

There were stalls with women from different organisations selling food, T-shirts, dresses made by co-operatives, and books and magazines.

Woman and the Future in a Changing South Africa

In Lenasia about 200 women came to a conference called "Women and the Future in a Changing South Africa". There were many talks on different topics given by women.

The Young Lionesses

Women students at Khanya College in Johannesburg organised a challenging celebration of August 9. Women speakers talked about the role of women in the church, in unions, and in organisations. There was poetry reading, and the choir from the South African Domestic Workers' Union. Sister Bernard of FEDTRAW spoke. Jennifer Ferguson sang a tribute to the brave women of South Africa. The Khanya students, young women and men, performed plays about sexual harassment, male domination, and the inequality between men and women in the home. The whole event gave everyone a lot to think about. So we say, Viva the young women, viva! Viva the young lionesses! Freedom in our time!

Stand Up and Make it Happen!

August 9 is not just about celebrating the past. It is also about the future.

In the words of Sister Bernard Ncube, the president of the Federation of Transvaal Women (FEDTRAW): "It is for you to stand up. Let's not just remember the stalwarts of the 1950's. Let's remember the stalwarts of '88 and '89. Liberation is set. We can move it. You are the ones. Stand up and make it happen. Stand up and work. Don't just sing songs and slogans. Actions bring about actions to bring about liberation." ●



Photograph by Anna Zieminski

Sister Bernard in a fiery speech. Women, you can do it!



Photograph by Cedric Nunn, Afrapix

SADWU comrades join in at the Khanya College celebration.



Photograph by Cedric Nunn, Afrapix

Hospital workers at the New Johannesburg Hospital are making demands. The workers, who are mostly women, are members of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union. They want the hospital desegregated, decent paid maternity leave, and their union recognised.

A Day of Action

Beating a Sign of Love?

Did you hear about the Zimbabwean senator who said that beating your wife is a sign that you love her, and you only do it to teach her a lesson. If beating is a sign of love, what is a sign of hate? Maybe all these years of beatings that freedom-loving people have had from the apartheid system is a sign of love after all? Funny way of showing love.

May 28 was declared International Women's Health Day of Action in 1988. This day has become a day of action around women's health all over the world. It focuses especially on the problem of women dying from backstreet abortions, and in childbirth.

In Peru, South America, women marched to the main cemetery to remember the thousands of women who have died from childbirth or backstreet abortions. Women then spoke about the situation of women's health, and demands for better health services were made.

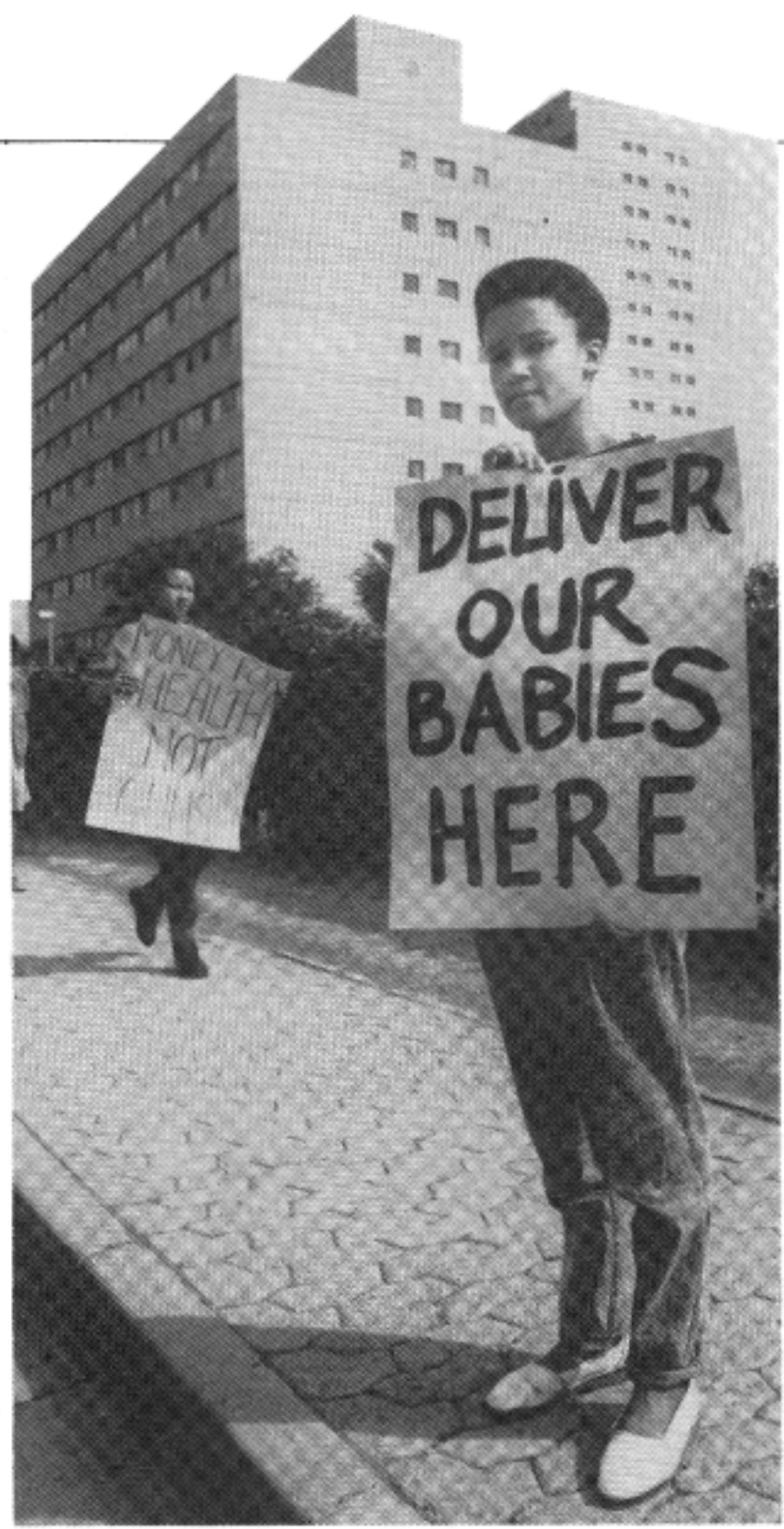
In Uruguay, South America, women also took action. Women filled the front, the halls and the entrance of the Pereira Rossel Hospital, the main mother-child health care centre. There they had talks on health and discussed personal stories about women's health problems.

In Johannesburg, South Africa, the Women's Division of the South African Council of Churches took up the day of action by focusing on cancer of the cervix, which kills many women.

Many other countries all over the world took up the "International Women's Health Day of Action". Let's organise for more and more women to focus on women's health. Health is our right!

Information from Isis number 1, 1989.

Yesterday Today and Tomorrow



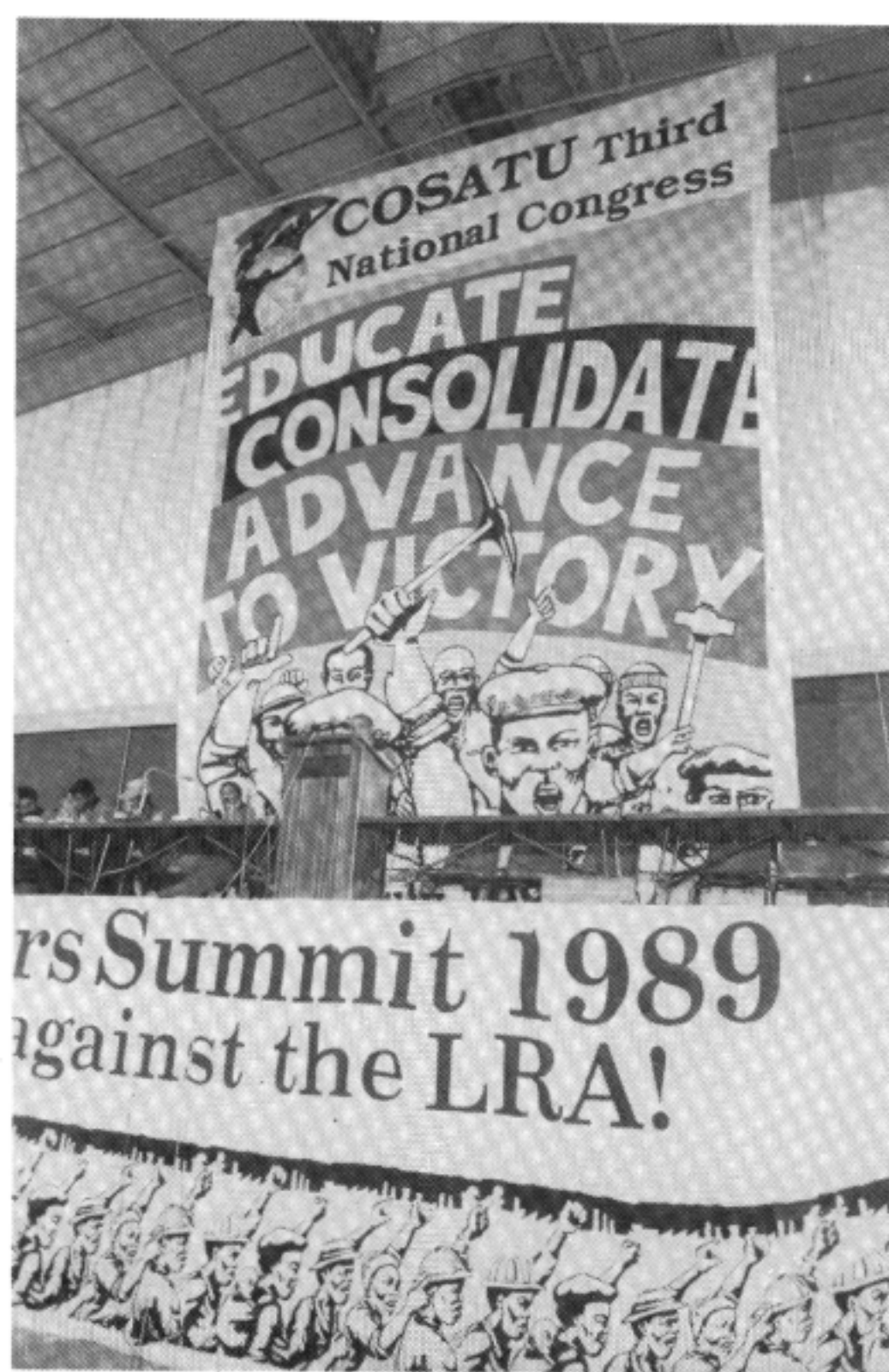
Photograph by Cedric Nunn, Afrapix

Open the hospitals to all! A woman takes part in the hospital defiance campaign outside the General Hospital in Johannesburg.



Photograph by SPEAK Collective

The Johannesburg Women's Local in the Paper, Printing and Allied Workers' Union is meeting regularly. They are working on a play on women's issues.



THE GIANT GROWS

Cosatu's Resolutions on Women

"A giant is born!" These words welcomed the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) when it was formed in 1985. The COSATU Congress in Johannesburg in July 1989 saw the spirit of this giant as it grows in strength. 1800 workers and officials from unions affiliated to COSATU attended this Congress. It was the biggest Congress ever held. There was a fighting spirit. And for most of the time there was a strong feeling of unity. The unions mean business in their fight against the oppressive labour laws and apartheid.

There was not always unity on the issue of women's oppression. There was much discussion, and some very hot debate on the resolutions on women. And one resolution on women's oppression did not get passed because the Congress could not agree on it. But even so, as Dorothy Mokgalo, a shopsteward from the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), told us: "The resolutions are a step forward. Putting women's resolutions forward creates an awareness. It means everybody will see the need to realise that women are part of the working class."

End to Sexist Language

One of the first things that the Congress agreed to do was to put an end to sexist language in the COSATU constitution. The constitution talked about men instead of people, and gave the idea that COSATU was only about men. The change means that words like 'chairman' will no longer be used. They will use 'chairperson'. And this will make it clear that women too can be in the leadership of COSATU.

National Women's Organisation

The one resolution agreed upon with little debate was on the need for a national women's organisation. Jerry Najatladi, who is from the National Union of Mineworkers told us: "Women thus far are in small pockets of women's organisations. We need to build a national women's organisation."

The Congress decided that the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) should be revived, and that COSATU would help with the revival of FEDSAW. FEDSAW was active in the 1950's in organising women in the fight against apartheid.

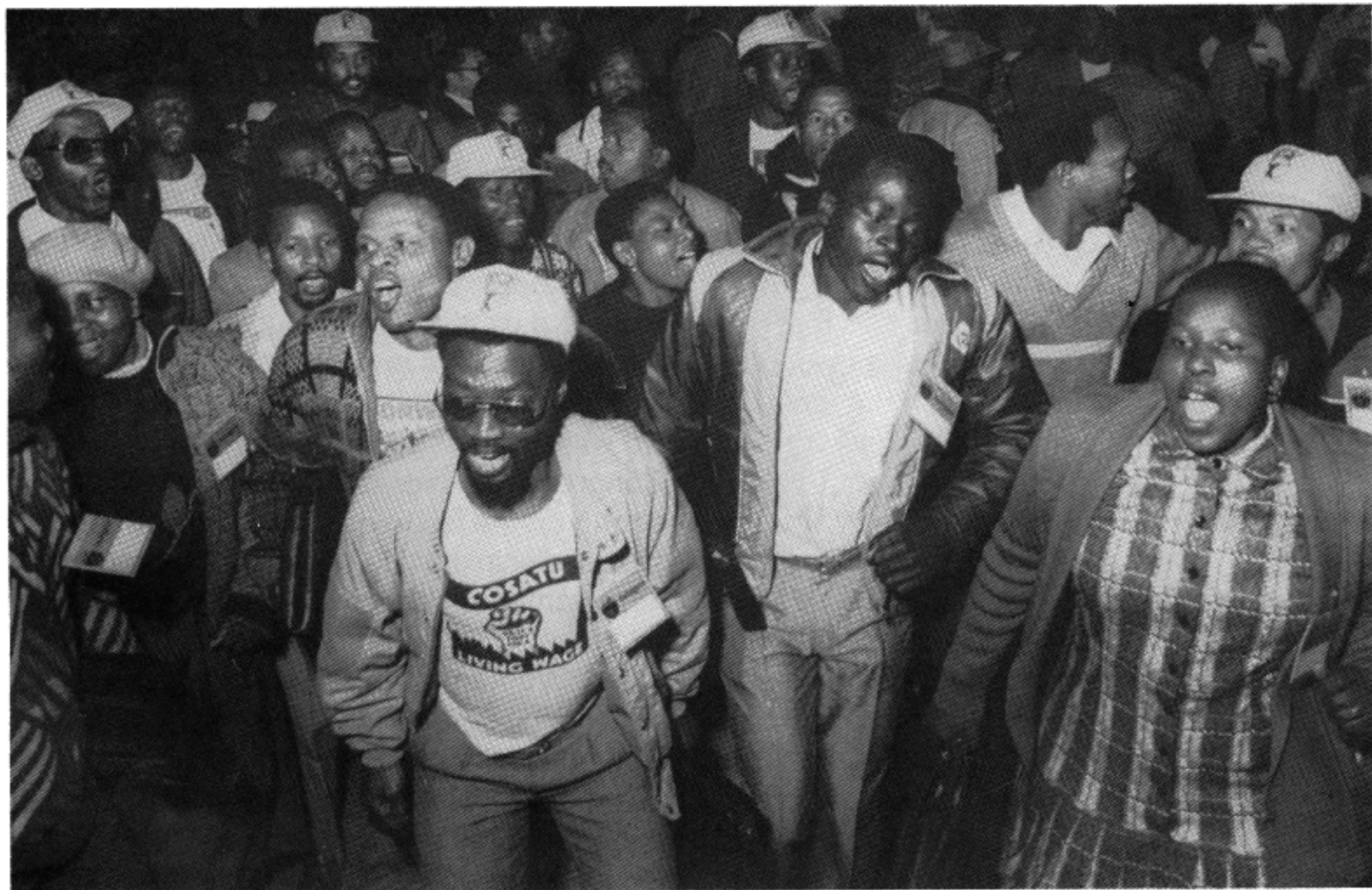
Women and Leadership

Another important problem was raised in the resolution on women and leadership. The resolution said that there are very few women organisers and very few women leaders in the factories, in the unions and in COSATU itself.

Jane Barrett, General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), and Dorothy Mogkalo of NUMSA told us why this was an important issue to discuss. Jane said: "It is not just at a senior level that we need women leadership. We need it at the factory level. People think that men are better than women. Or that women are not eligible. We need to make sure that

there are women at all levels of leadership. Even where there are a large number of women workers you find most of the organisers are men."

Dorothy felt that the problem was with the attitudes of men and women. She said: "It is not because women aren't wanting to or are not able to take up leadership. Women have got that capability to do the job. Women can do it. The problems we face especially are with the custom. We believe men are always above. It is a problem of attitude, not skill. There is nothing we can't do as women." But not all women at the Congress agreed on the problems and solutions to women's leadership. There was a lot of discussion on this. Jane said: "There was an angry response from those in favour of the resolution. It was the first time at the Congress that women really spoke out. Woman after woman spoke for and against. Some said that women are not ready to be elected to leadership positions. That women



Photograph by Cedric Nunn, Afrapix

It was the biggest Congress ever. The mood was militant and strong. July 1989.



Photograph by Gill de Vlieg, Afrapix

The Congress decided that the idea should be spread that men should share the housework.

need special education before they can be elected into the leadership. Others said: "How can you say women need special education - men don't need special education!" But in the end the Congress agreed that women's leadership must be advanced immediately. The Congress decided that unions must make sure that women workers are elected as shopstewards on the factory floor, and into leadership at all levels.

Fight the Things That Stand in Women's Way

It was decided that the things which stand in the way of women being in leadership must be fought. These things are lack of childcare, the double burden caused by housework, and meetings that end late at night. The Congress decided that unions should provide childcare at meetings where it is needed. They will also assist to transport women comrades home when meetings end late and where it is dangerous for them to take public transport.

And the Congress decided that the idea should be spread that housework should be shared between men and women.

Sexual Conduct

The resolution that caused the hottest and longest discussion was the resolution on sexual conduct put forward by TGWU. The debate lasted for four hours. And this was one of the only resolutions put to the Congress that was not agreed to. But even though the resolution was not passed, Jane from TGWU felt that it had raised an important issue. And it had started a debate in COSATU.

The Personal Is Political

The resolution raised the problem that it often happens that male comrades in unions use their position in the union to get involved in casual relationships with younger women who are new to the union. And when these unequal relationships end, the women often drop out of the organisation. And sometimes divisions in the union start. This is seen as a problem, as women are not taken seriously as activists and comrades. The resolution also said that there have been many incidents of sexual harassment of women comrades by male comrades in the unions. The resolution called for more discipline from men in the organisation.

Jane told us that the resolution was put forward because of problems that they had experienced in their union. She said: "When we were planning the resolutions to take to Congress, the president of our union felt very strong on the issue of sexual harassment and sexual discipline. He spoke of the problem of new women recruits who often get involved in relationships with more senior men in the union. Women were being exploited in these relationships. When the relationship ended, women would leave the union, and stop being active. He said this was a regular pattern that he saw happening. This report led to discussion. And it was clear that male organisers were also using their position with new women recruits. It was happening in

other unions. All of this inspired the resolution on sexual conduct. People were saying: 'the personal is political.'"

Men Need Education

The discussion on this resolution shows clearly the need for more discussion and education on the problems of sexism, sexual harassment and the power men have over women in our society. It also shows that most men and women at the Congress were not ready to accept that these things are really happening.

Some felt the resolution should never have been brought to Congress. Others felt that oppression of women is a reality, like racism, and needs to be tackled head-on. The resolution did not get enough support or agreement from the Congress. Congress decided to refer the question of sexual conduct for further discussion, and to include this in the COSATU code of conduct that unions are working on. The code of conduct deals with how an activist should behave in all aspects of life.

The Road Ahead

The resolutions passed are so far just on paper. It was decided that a women's sub-committee under the National Education Committee (NEDCOM) of COSATU would be set up. It would check the progress and co-ordinate putting the resolutions on national organisation and leadership into action. This is a big step forward, as COSATU now has a committee that is responsible for taking women's struggles forward and for making sure women do play a bigger part in the unions.

But what about the resolution that did not get passed? Will attitudes to the sexual harassment of women comrades by men comrades change?

Jane said: "The positive thing is that the issue has been raised, and that the debate will continue. I have faith that consciousness will change. The debate at the Congress was

alive. The issue will be pursued through the code of conduct."

Dorothy also feels positive. She felt that men must be educated to support and respect women. And she felt sure that attitudes towards women will change in time. She said: "The spirit of the Congress was that everybody is prepared to take the struggle forward. We are not prepared to retard the struggle."

The Future Lies in the Hands of Women and Men in COSATU.

There is still a long road to travel before the unions are united and strong in the fight against sexism and women's oppression. The discussion at the Congress shows this clearly. But it is a start that more resolutions were brought by unions on women than ever before. And it is a start that these issues were discussed. What lies ahead is the task of building on all of this, to make sure that women's oppression is taken up as seriously as the fight against the bosses and apartheid.●



Photograph by Anna Zieminski

The women's resolutions have raised many issues that hold women workers back. Now is the time to move forward!



Wedding day.

Photograph by Cedric Nunn, Afrapix

Will there be lobola in a post-apartheid society?

A Burning Issue

"Lobola is a burning issue," say Phillipine Mathele and Princess Palepale, who are students at Khanya College in Johannesburg. They went out to ask young people what they thought of lobola in these changing times. The question they asked was: Will there be lobola in a post-apartheid South Africa? The people they spoke to were quite excited about the subject. And they wanted to give their views.

Our Culture Today - Our Culture Tomorrow

Some people saw lobola as a good part of our cultural heritage, and others saw it as oppressive to women. Some said that the meaning and value of lobola has changed over the years.

Palesa Xorile is a 23 year old student from Soweto. She said: "Because lobola is our culture, and it was there before the emergence of western culture, it should exist in a post-apartheid South Africa. Our great grandparents valued lobola because it shows the pride the parents have in their daughter."

Tumi Mabena is a 20 year old student. He felt there would not be lobola in a post-apartheid South Africa because it does not have any value anymore. He said: "There is no difference because young people stay together without lobola. Especially in the urban areas. The generation of today are less interested in tradition. Today the parents of the bride make business by demanding a lot of money. In return they want the groom to take care of their child in all respects."

A Common Culture

Evelyn Lehoki, a 20 year old student, feels strongly about the issue of lobola, culture, and the future South Africa. She said: "In a post-apartheid South Africa, we will be guided by an ideal of a non-racial democratic South Africa. So there will be no prejudice on mixed marriages. Therefore we will have to achieve a common culture across the colour line. I believe there will be new norms to replace the marriage negotiations."

Equal Rights

Earlel Mailula is 27 years old and lives in

Johannesburg. He spoke about the changes in meaning of the tradition of lobola. He said: "In the past the understanding of the bridegroom was that he was accepting a woman as a minor, and accommodating her into the responsibilities of the adult world of the man. But now things have changed. Today lobola is no more done in the old way of paying livestock, but by the academic qualifications of the girl. Today our culture has changed radically. Women are fighting for equal rights with men. In a post-apartheid South Africa, lobola will be there, and it will be shared equally amongst the spouses. Or the price system should be abolished and there will be the exchange of gifts between both parties."

Tradition or Business?

Some people believe that if you do not pay lobola, you do not value the woman. You undervalue her, or get her 'for cheap'. Other people say that lobola has turned into a business. And others say that lobola turns women into things that you can buy, like furniture.

Pauline Motsoane is 23 years old. She said that she felt lobola should be paid. "It gives respect to a girl," she said. "If a man has paid lobola he can have other girlfriends but he cannot forget his wife."

Nomvula Toko is a 19-year-old student. She said: "People will not want to lose their tradition. Lobola restores family pride in the bride. The groom will show the bride's family that he will be able to take care of their daughter since he is able to pay lobola. Lobola is not trade but acceptance of the two families, and bringing the two families together."

Tredgi Maepa is a 19-year-old student from the Northern Transvaal. He said: "I don't foresee the existence of lobola in post-apartheid South Africa because that will be the people's government, whereby the people will be in power. The majority of people are against lobola because lobola has turned into business."

Equality or Control of the Woman?

Have you ever heard a man say: "I can do what I want to my wife. I paid for her. She belongs to me."? Aaron Matlala is worried about this kind of thinking that often goes with lobola. He is a 23-year-old student. He says: "The money paid for lobola brings inequality between men and women because the man will regard his wife as a commodity. He is going to control his wife whenever he wants. And the woman must not say anything because the woman was paid for. If lobola does not exist there will be a contract between men and women that will show the two are married. In that way men and women will be equal, because they will share everything equally."

Joseph Gigimane is 32 years old. He said: "Lobola will not exist in a post-apartheid South Africa. It is no more a sign of goodwill as it was supposed to be. With lobola the bridegroom feels that he has bought the bride in that sense of buying furniture. The wife, like furniture, becomes property and can be shifted around without having a say. It also gives males that unsound idea that they are superior and dominant."

Nana Gumede, 35 years old, refuses to accept that the lobola system is in any way good for women. She said: "Parents demand thousands of rand for their daughter. They don't think about the financial problems that they are putting onto the young couple. And then once the lobola has been paid, the husband does not see the difference between his wife and any other thing he has had to pay for. Then he expects her to jump when he tells her to. I am not interested in lobola. My father knows this and we argue about it. But I say that if he demands five thousand rand, I will pay half and my husband will pay half. There is no ways that I will be paid for."

Lobola is a very important issue that affects most people's lives. We have to make sure that the peoples' culture that we take with us into the post-apartheid South Africa does not oppress women. What do you think about lobola? Write and tell us. Write to: SPEAK Collective, P.O. Box 19375, Dormerton, 4015, Durban,

Dear Doctor

Dear SPEAK Doctor

I think you can help me by answering my question. I have something that keeps worrying me. Maybe I shouldn't bother about it, but seeing that I now have this opportunity of asking you about anything that worries me, I thought: here's a chance of getting information about my troubles.

I am 30 years old. Just lately I've noticed that I get pains in my breasts, especially when I take off my bra. I've asked older women about this. Some say maybe I've conceived, but that's not possible because my boyfriend has been away for more than three months, and I have no substitute for him. I would appreciate it if you could answer my question.

Yours
Worried

Dear Worried

Thank you for your letter. The problem of painful breasts is shared by many women. There are many things that can cause painful breasts. We can understand these things better if we understand how our breasts work. People often think of breasts as sexual objects which men talk about. Or people think of breasts as things that produce milk for babies. But your breasts are part of your body. They change every day of the month, just like your womb does.

Every month, your breasts get ready for pregnancy. If you get pregnant, your breasts and nipples feel sore or different. Your breasts are

getting ready to produce milk. If you do not become pregnant, the changes in your breasts usually go away again, until the next month. For some women this does not happen. Their breasts get swollen and tender, but these feelings do not go away when their period comes. As you get older, sore and swollen breasts may trouble you more. And they usually feel worse just before your period comes. Here are some ideas about how to help with the problem.

Wear a bra, especially one that stretches. Talk to your clinic about going on the Pill. The Pill sometimes makes these pains better. There are good and bad things about the Pill. Make sure that you ask the clinic for a Pill that suits you. The Pill does not suit all women, and it is important to be aware of this.

There are tablets called 'water tablets' that you can get from your doctor. These tablets make you wee more often, and may help with swollen, painful breasts. You could try this to see if 'water tablets' suit you.

Many women with painful breasts worry that they have got breast cancer. It is important that any woman with painful breasts asks a doctor to examine her breasts. They may feel a lump which needs to be cut out. They may find nothing wrong at all. But at least if you have your breasts examined, it can take the worry away. When you are examined by the doctor, ask her to teach you how to examine your own breasts. And make sure that she explains everything that she is doing to you, so that you can understand.

It is important for all women to learn how to examine their breasts, to check that everything is healthy with them. We will write about this in the next issue of SPEAK, so don't forget to make sure that you get your copy!

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.**

Breastfeeding Your Baby

Breast is Best!

Breast milk is the best food to give a baby. It has the right balance of fat and protein for a baby. It is full of vitamins and minerals that help the baby to grow strong. Breast milk protects the baby against infections like diarrhoea, pneumonia, polio and measles.

How Your Body Prepares for Breastfeeding

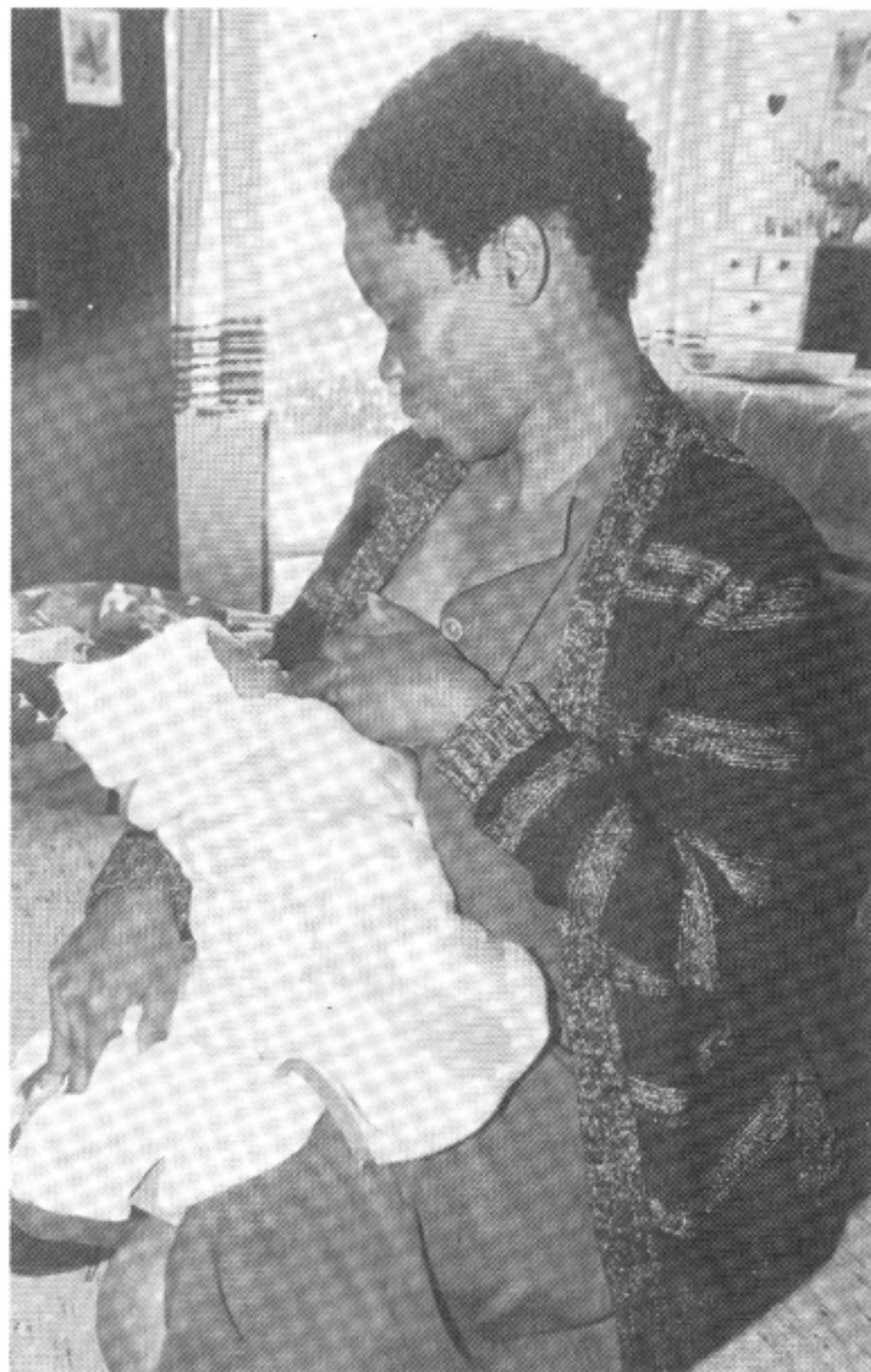
Changes in your breasts are often the first thing that tell you that you are pregnant. Very early in their pregnancies, many women notice that their breasts are painful and their nipples feel sensitive. Their breasts feel larger and heavier than before. This means that their breasts are getting ready to produce milk.

One important thing that you have to decide when you are pregnant, is whether you want to breastfeed your baby. If you decide that you do want to, then there are things that you can do to prepare for breastfeeding.

You Can Prepare for Breastfeeding

As your pregnancy continues, your breasts often feel heavier and uncomfortable. Wear a bra to support them. Wash your breasts daily with mild soap and water. Start to gently rub your nipples. Some women's nipples are flat or turned in. You must start to pull them out several times a day. Put your thumbs on either side of the nipple and press down into the breast and away from the nipple. Slowly the nipples will start to stand out more and more. If they do not, ask the doctor or midwife in your antenatal clinic for nipple shields. These are cups that fix inside your bra and cover your nipples. They slowly make your nipples stand out, ready for the baby to suck on.

Before the baby is born, your breasts may



Photograph by Gill de Vlieg, Afrapix

A special love between you and your baby.

start to produce a thin yellow milk called colostrum. If you do not get this milk, do not worry. You will still be able to breast feed.

When Can You Start To Breastfeed Your Baby?

You can start to breastfeed your baby as soon as she is born. Many health workers believe it is good to put the baby to the breast for its first suck before the cord has even been cut! Ask the midwife or doctor to help you to breastfeed as early as possible. 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. After two days your breasts suddenly become very large and uncomfortable. This is a sign that



Photograph by Cedric Nunn, Afrapix

You can still breastfeed if you have a Caesarian birth.

the ordinary breast milk has come into the breasts. After a day or two, your breasts will feel comfortable, especially if the baby is being put on the breast regularly.

How Often Should You Breastfeed Your Baby?

Feed your baby every time she cries or feels hungry. This may mean that you only feed her three times in the day but six times at night. That is alright. As the baby sucks, more milk is made in your breasts. It is important to put the baby on the breast as often as she wants. You will soon find that your breasts have plenty of milk. As soon as the baby starts to suck, this milk comes out slowly. Then you get a strong tingling feeling in the breast, and the milk pours out quickly. The baby swallows the milk quickly, and sometimes pulls away from the breast to breathe. The milk may spray out like a fountain. This is nature's way of squeezing milk out of the breast.

Do You Need to Eat More When You Are Breastfeeding?

Some women get very hungry when they are breastfeeding. This is their body telling them that they must eat more so that they can make enough milk for the baby. So, if you

feel hungry, then eat. But try to eat healthy food like vegetables, meat and fruit. This is best for you and your baby.

Many women feel very thirsty when they are breastfeeding. It is a good idea to keep a glass of water next to you to drink when you are breastfeeding. This is your body's way of making sure that you have enough fluid to make milk for the baby.

Can You Breastfeed if You Are Sick or if You Have Had a Caesarean Section?

If you have a cold, or a fever, you can go on breastfeeding. There are a few illnesses, like TB, when the doctor may tell you to stop breastfeeding. If you are ill, get advice from your doctor or the clinic. If you had a Caesarean Section you can breastfeed as soon as the baby is born. But you will need more help from the midwives to begin with. Do not be afraid to ask for help!

Problems that Can Happen with Breastfeeding

If you watch other mothers breastfeed, they make it look so easy. Breastfeeding is easy for most women, but for some women there can be problems to begin with. These problems are more likely to happen if it is your first baby. For example, the baby may

take time to learn how to suck on the nipple. Your nipples may become sore and even crack and bleed. Often it is difficult to settle the baby on the breast when your baby is first born. If this happens, try to feed for only a short time, for three minutes on each breast, for example.

If your nipples are very sore, go to your doctor or clinic to get special cream to rub on them. Sometimes the breasts themselves can get sore. The milk can get trapped in the breasts. They become red and hard, and you may get a fever. Use hot cloths on these sore breasts and gently squeeze the milk out of the breasts. If they don't get better in 12 hours, then it is best to go to the doctor or clinic for advice.

Breastfed babies often wake up a lot at night. Mothers who are breastfeeding can get very tired. Try to get extra rest if you are a breastfeeding mother.

All babies get hungry and need to eat. Most babies will suck well on the breast straight away. But some babies are fussy. They cannot get the nipple nicely into their mouths, and they fuss and pull away. Some babies are sleepy, especially if they are premature. If this happens, don't give up! Your baby will get hungry. She'll learn to suck on the nipple with time. Try changing her position on the breast. Hold her under your arm to feed. You can even try changing from one breast to another. Babies often have a favourite side that they like to suck from. But even if you are having problems feeding, try not to give your baby a bottle. Once the baby is used to a bottle teat, she may become lazy about breastfeeding.

When you face these problems, it is easy to think about giving up trying to breastfeed. Especially with all the advertisements around you from the baby milk companies that tell you about bottle feeding. But try not to give up. Those first few days of difficulty will give way to many months of easy breastfeeding in the future.

The Good Things About Breastfeeding

When you are pregnant, you store fat on your body ready to feed the baby. Breastfeeding uses up this fat and helps you to lose the weight that you put on during pregnancy. Breastfeeding also helps the womb to get back to its normal size quickly after the birth of your baby. This is why many women get afterpains from the womb when they are breastfeeding.

When you breastfeed, the milk is always there. It is always clean, and is nice and warm. And breast milk costs you nothing. Breast milk is better than any baby food or baby milk powder that you can buy. Breastfeeding brings you very close to your baby. There is a special love that can grow between you and your baby as she sucks on your breast.

Bosses and Adverts

Although breast milk is best, there are many pressures on women not to breastfeed. It can be very hard for women who go out to work to breastfeed, even when they would like to. Bosses do not make it easy for women to breastfeed at work. It may be difficult to breastfeed if you are in a job that does not give proper maternity leave. These are issues that women in unions need to take up in the factories.

There are a lot of advertisements around from baby milk companies that tell us that babies love milk powder. The advertisements tell us how baby milk powder is like mother's milk. And many hospitals give new-born babies bottles instead of encouraging mothers to breastfeed. The truth is that there is nothing better that you can give your baby than your own breast milk. The baby milk powder companies are interested in the profits that they can make from selling their products.

There are also a lot of adverts in newspapers, magazines, on TV and on billboards that treat women's breasts as if they are objects just for sexual pleasure. Or as if they are toys. We have to fight these ideas.●

WOMEN ORGANISE

AGAINST EXPLOITATION

DEMOCRACY AT WORK

DEMOCRACY AT HOME



NATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY ALL