

SPEAK

1991

R1.50

No. 35



A Fighting Force? - ANC Women's League Conference



A man without broken hands
talks about housework

We have a Dream
young women talk

Inside

Letters.....3

Women's League-.....4

A fighting force ?

Helen Sibidi.....7

Artist

Women Teachers.....10

Fighting demands

Oupa Mmotsa.....13

A man without broken hands

Book Review.....14

The life of Jabu Ndlovu

Stop the Violence.....19

ANC Women take action

We have a Dream.....22

Young women talk

Agenda Forum.....25

On women's liberation

Philly Lutaya.....26

The struggle against AIDS

VAT.....28

What is it?

IUD.....31

Preventing pregnancy

Cover Photo by ANC of ANC Women's League Executive Seated left to right - Baleka Kgositsile, Nosiviwe Maphisa, Mavivi Manzini, Gertrude Shope, Albertina Sisulu.

Standing left to right - Winnie Mandela, Ruth Mompati, Thandi Modise, Ivy Gcina, Mako Njobe.



SPEAK Comment

SPEAK 35 goes to printers at a time when the smell of blood, death and destruction fills the air and the sound of wailing in our country is deafening. Thousands of our people have been killed. Thousands more live in fear, homelessness and despair. Unless we build peace and tolerance from the ground up, we will bury thousands more.

The government must take responsibility for investigating all reports of people who are fuelling conflict among the people of this country. The government must act to end the violence. It must stop favouring one group over another. Allowing people to carry 'traditional weapons' that can kill is giving those people a licence to do so. The police and army must be made accountable for their actions. They must serve the interests of life, not death.

The African National Congress (ANC) Women's League showed itself to be a force that can be mobilised in their recent mass action against violence.

Women are truly sick of watching men at war. So often women are the ones left to mop up tears, blood and life. Women are known to have mediation skills. The nation should use the skills women have in helping to resolve the violence.

SPEAK offices : Durban - Office 1708, 17 Floor, Metal Industries House, 15 Ordinance Road, Durban 4001. Telephone (031) 3683325

Johannesburg - Office 7, 17 Floor, Conlyn House, 156 President Street, Johannesburg, 2001. Telephone (011) 296166.

SPEAK postal address: P.O. Box 45213, Mayfair, 2108 Johannesburg, S.A.

SPEAK members are: Gill Lincoln, Helen Rees, Jacqueline Mathabe, Karen Hurt, Nise Malange, Phumelele Ntombela, Shamim Meer, Pumla Baloyi and Vanessa Taylor.

SPEAK

readers speak out

I encourage my darling

Without deceiving you I say: many thanks for your magazine. It's the first time I learnt about your suggestions, especially about women's views. I say VIVA ANC Women's League! I encourage my darling, who is my child's mother, to take part in the struggle. I'm her husband. I don't leave her behind when I go to rallies, conferences and mass meetings because Edna, my wife, is so crazy about the need to know about the Mzabalazo. I've given her SPEAK magazine to find out about women's rights and also so she can carry on to fight for herself. We're going to act together to fight for democracy.

I've been involved in the political struggle since 1985 when COSATU was first established for the workers in this country. Since then I was in trouble - jailed as a struggle prisoner until the ANC was unbanned in 1990. The way to freedom is too long. Aluta continua!

You too, comrades of SPEAK, forward ever, backwards never. Give us even more than you have already done.

AMANDLA!

I'm the guerilla
Mataru Madlebe
w-PTA

This is SPEAK readers' page. Write in and share your views. Thanks to all our readers who have written .

Please advise me

I am married. I have a child with my wife. But she is not educated. When I tell her to go to school she says school is nothing for her. She just needs children from me. And I don't need another child from her. So I just want you to advise me.
Yours in the struggle
Man from Mamelodi

Dear Man from Mamelodi, it sounds like there is a problem in your marriage - you each seem to want different things. We suggest you contact Family Life Association in Johannesburg at phone number (011) 833-2057 for help with your problem.

Support from Canada

Dear SPEAK
I am a young woman of 16 years old writing to you from Toronto, Canada. I have just come back from Swaziland where 18 Canadian students, including myself, worked to help build a classroom. It was in Mbabane that I bought SPEAK in a bookshop.

I would like to take this opportunity to respond to some of the issues presented in your wonderful magazine. I was not aware that the ANC has a Youth League and am very pleased to hear that it does. It is my hope that many young women get involved - we are the future!

In the article called 'Have boys lost the meaning of love?', violence against women was discussed. This is a problem all

over the world. Sisters of every colour, race and religion are faced with this violence. Women must not allow others to treat us like we are worthless, because we are not!

I would like to let the ANC Women's League know that their struggle is most important. I hope it will grow in size and strength. Such struggles are long and difficult - the members of the League must be strong, proud and persistent. Don't give up the fight for liberation of South Africa and liberation as women.

I have been made aware that many African women are oppressed by the laws of apartheid and by customs and traditions. By publishing a magazine like SPEAK you are educating the people. Such education is the first step toward liberation. I would like to be involved in your struggle, learn more about it and contribute in any small way possible. Perhaps by a sharing between cultures that share a problem we can benefit from one another? Would it be possible to keep up any sort of correspondence with SPEAK, the ANC Youth League, the ANC Women's League or any such organisation? Our countries and cultures are very different, but ... sisterhood is global! Yours in the struggle
Meredith Evans.
Toronto, Canada

*Dear Meredith,
Thank you for your support. We have sent your letter to the organisations you mentioned.*



Delegates at the Kimberley Conference Photo:Dynamic Images

The Women's League - a fighting force?

The African National Congress Women's League could become a toothless lioness in the liberation struggle if the traditional role of women is not challenged. Can the Women's League become a real fighting force?

The ANC Women's League held its first National Conference in Kimberley on 24 - 28 April 1991. 663 delegates from 14 internal regions, as well as external regions, attended the conference. Included in these was a delegation of Umkhonto weSizwe women members. The conference elected the first

national executive of the Women's League.

Hurdles ahead

Many delegates said the conference was "inspiring". But there are hurdles ahead. Not everyone in the Women's League agrees on the role of women in society. The newly

one of the decisions of the conference was to set up a commission to monitor and expose discrimination against women within the ANC .

elected national executive reflects the different kinds of thinking. Some women believe in women's traditional role of bearing children and serving men. Others believe women must be liberated from all forms of exploitation and oppression if they are to be truly liberated.

Commissions

Important discussion took place on the structure of the organisation, the state of organisation and on emancipation and development of women. There were about 200 women in each commission. Although these were large groups they gave more women a chance to take part in discussion. Each commission brought draft resolutions to the conference.

There was a great deal of debate on the structure of the Women's League. Women argued strongly that the structure must be highly accountable to the grassroots membership. They want to make sure that power within the Women's League lies with the branches. It was agreed that only 11 women would be elected at this conference. Each region would then send its own representative to the National Executive Committee. It was agreed that women who were still in exile would be represented in this structure.

Resolutions that bite

The Conference agreed that the ANC must have a national commission on the Emancipation of Women so there will be action on women's rights within the ANC itself. Mavivi Manzini spoke about this. She said: "Now it is becoming very urgent to have the commission on women. The commission will make sure all the issues of discrimination against women within our movement are taken up beyond mission statements such as that of May 2 last year."

The commission will monitor and expose discrimination against women in the ANC and it will make sure affirmative action is taken so that women are in leadership positions.

The new national executive committee has the task of making sure this commission is set up. The commission will be discussed at the ANC National Conference in July 1991. The women said it is very important that this commission is part of the ANC as a whole., One delegate said: "We do not want it to be just something that belongs to the women's corner."

Leadership code

Many delegates said the conference was run very democratically. But women want more than democratic conferences. They want democracy everyday and they want their leadership to be accountable to them. In order to make this real, all regions of the Women's League will take part in drawing up a leadership code.



ANC Women called for democracy and a leadership that is accountable. Photo: Dynamic Images

Women's League - A fighting Force?

Before elections much discussion took place on the process of voting. Many women could not read and write. So it was decided to use coloured pieces of paper for voting. Each colour represented a different person.

The new National Executive Committee of the Women's League, is made up of: Gertrude Shope (president), Albertina Sisulu (vice-president), Baleka Kgositsile (secretary-general), Mako Njobe (treasurer), Nosiviwe Maphisa (national organiser), Mavivi Manzini, Hilda Ndude, Thandi Modise, Ruth Mompati, Ivy Gcina and Winnie Mandela.

Training and action

Conference decided to set up a Women's Training Centre, especially to serve rural and illiterate women, to do research on gender issues, and to develop organisational and political skills among women.

Women spoke about the terrible violence that is sweeping the country. They said this would be given priority in their programme of action.

Much of the conference was very serious. But there were some lighter, joyful moments as well. When Marion Sparg, an ANC Umkhonto weSizwe guerilla recently released from prison walked in, there was much singing and joyful slogans to welcome her as a special guest.

Another lively moment was when women stalwarts sang songs of the struggles they had taken up in the 1950's as young girls. Among the stalwarts present were Ray Alexander, Dorothy Nyembe and Frances Baard.

Mothers club or fighting force?

"Women Act Now for Equality, Unity and Development" was the theme for this historic conference. Clearly there is a great deal of organising at all levels and in all sectors of the movement to bring to fruit a South Africa that treats women as equal human beings.

Whether the League matures into a 'mothers' club or a strong fighting force for women's liberation remains to be seen. If some of the conference resolutions are seen through there is hope. ✪



There are different views within the League on the role of women. Some accept traditional roles. Some want to see women liberated from serving men. Which view will guide the programmes of the League is yet to be seen. Picture Left to right: Ruth Mompati, Ray Alexander, Albertina Sisulu, Gertrude Shope.

Photo: Dynamic Images

Helen Sibidi is a South African artist. She makes pottery. She paints. Her paintings are full of colour and action. They show a strong, creative and determined mind at work. We spoke to her about her work.

Helen Sibidi



In 1988 Helen won the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Fine Art. In the same year she was one of the finalists in the Star newspaper's 'Woman of the Year' awards. In 1989 Helen won a Fulbright Scholarship to study overseas. She has held shows of her work both in South Africa and overseas.

Helen's road to becoming an artist has been full of dust and stones, poverty and hope. It has been a tough and sometimes bitter struggle.

A strong, creative woman

When you meet Helen you meet a strong and confident woman who speaks from her soul. A woman with a strong belief in her roots in the soil of Africa.

Helen grew up in Marapyane, a rural area near Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria, with her grandmother who, she says, "was a very artistic person, was an artist herself." It was her grandmother who brought Helen up as a child.

When she was a teenager Helen moved to Johannesburg to find work. But the city was full of hostility and racism. Helen says: "It wasn't easy for anybody to do whatever she liked because an African

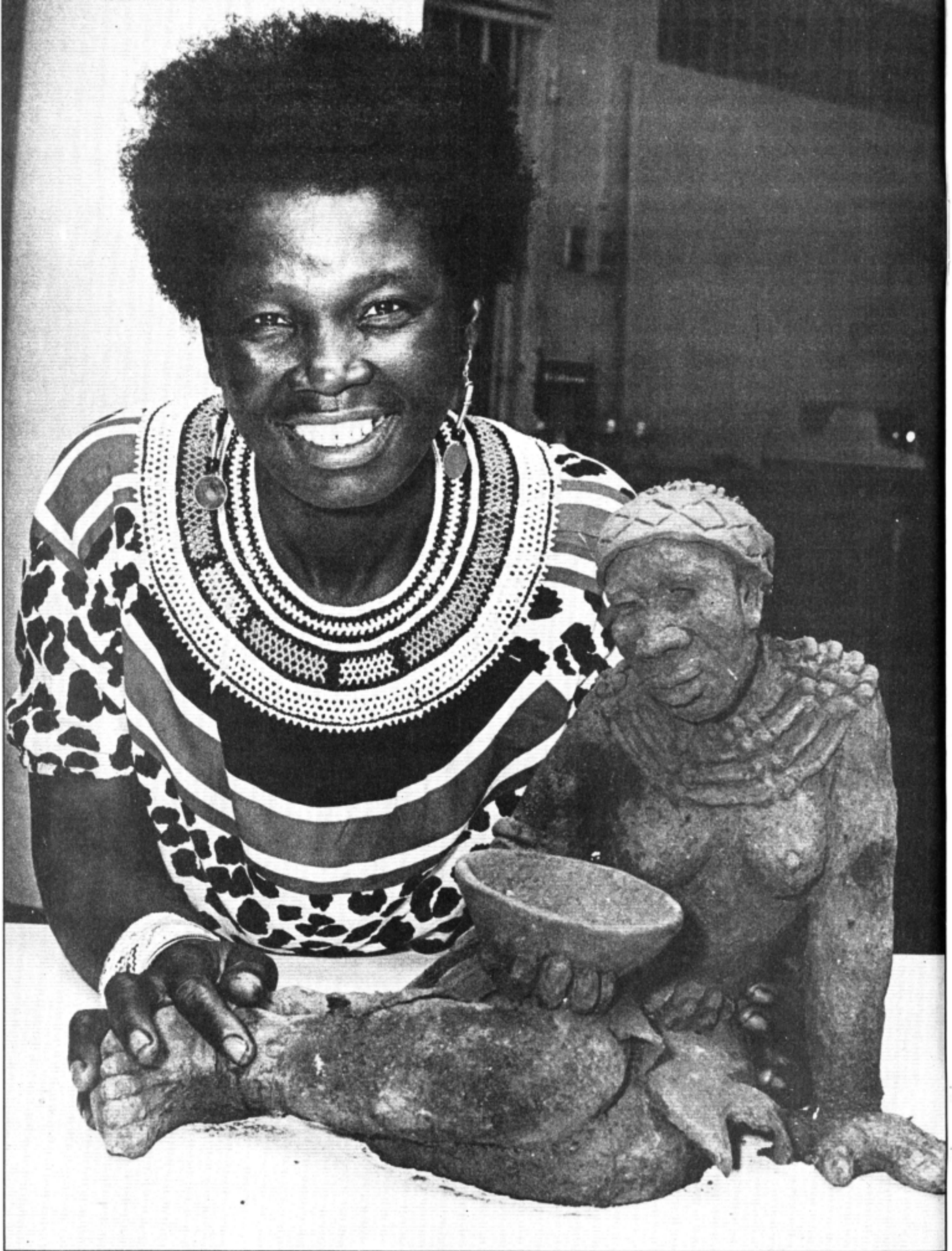
person could not walk in the street without questions. It always used to be policemen asking what you were doing here. So I looked on the whole white situation and I saw that they are free and I felt this was not my country."

The experience of racism

Helen met some friends and began to work in the city as a domestic worker. But she found it hard to relate to the people she worked for. Calling her boss 'madam' did not come easily.

"I was never forced to call people by specific words. So I always asked if there was anything I had done wrong and she said 'no'. So I asked what was the use of the word if we were working together?"

Helen experienced the racism of white South Africa in many different ways. She remembers an incident that happened more than once: "One day I had to babysit so I slept in the bed and they completely stripped the bed the next morning and I had to wash all the sheets and the blankets. I didn't realise what it meant and I kept on doing it again because I didn't know that I was doing



HELEN'S ROAD TO BECOMING AN ARTIST HAS BEEN FULL OF DUST AND STONES

wrong." Helen found this difficult to take and she moved to different employers but found the same attitude again and again.

Things changed for the better when Helen met some German people. They became her friends. She moved into a house with them. But the neighbours, who they rented the house from, were very angry because they saw she, a black woman, was living inside the main house.

"They were spitting at me and fighting with me. They asked if I was brought up by Afrikaners and I said 'no, I was brought up by my grandmother'. They called the police and they asked why I wasn't talking Afrikaans. They said I was selfish. They didn't want me to sleep in the house because they said I would bring cockroaches and bugs into the house."

The artist in Helen woke up

One day Helen saw a painting that her German friend had bought to send to Germany. The woman herself used to paint but now no longer did. Seeing the painting awoke the artist in Helen.

Of the German woman Helen says: "I think she was the person to come and remind me who I was, because she wasn't keeping painting up. But after I saw the painting, I thought 'how long have I been looking for this?' Using her friend's paint Helen started to paint.

Helen searched for and found other artists to look at her work. She didn't want to show her work to people who just said 'that's nice.' She wanted people who would say 'look, this is not right' or 'try that'. She learnt from and found inspiration in other black artists.

She had to return to her grandmother's home in 1975 and stayed there until

1981. During this time she did paint but she showed no-one other than her grandmother.

"I was doing it alone in my bedroom. I didn't let anyone into my bedroom. First of all I felt I was going to be frustrated and I didn't want my work to be called 'nice' by those people who are not painters. But the painters are going to say it is rubbish. So I couldn't please the people who are not painters before I pleased the painters. So I didn't want to destroy myself." Helen's grandmother encouraged and supported her art.

Her work on show

When Helen returned to Johannesburg she was able to put some of her work on show. But how did she manage to make ends meet? Helen talks about how she managed. It wasn't easy.

"I'd take a taxi to Alexandra and when he dropped me in Alexandra I'd have to tell him that I will see him. I was that person. Sometimes I didn't even have R2.00 to come into the town. Maybe I'd have cooldrink bottles in my home and sell those for my bus fare."

After getting to a place, like Zoo Lake, to put her paintings on show, Helen would sell her work, repay money owed to the friend who'd taken her and her paintings to Zoo Lake, repay the money to the taxi driver and go back home. Then she'd go to the shop and pay off money owed there and take another instalment and live off that for a while.

Helen Sibidi is a remarkable artist. She is an inspiration to other women to search inside themselves to find, perhaps, hidden talent. ☀

Forget about forgetting about our demands say women teachers

The question of fighting discrimination against women is alive in many democratic organisations. At the launch of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) one of the most hotly debated issues was how to take the struggle for women teachers' rights forward. The issue wasn't resolved. A national conference to discuss the issue is coming up in July this year.

The South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) represents teachers of all races in South Africa. SPEAK talked to women from SADTU's Southern Natal Region. These women have been given the task of organising the conference on women in July this year. Women teachers have many demands they see as important if they are to be treated as equals. The SADTU women point out that women are not fairly represented in leadership. More than 65% of SADTU members are women. But only one out of 28 Interim Executive members is a woman.

"We are very unhappy about this. We are going to have a conference soon to discuss how we can change this. Women's issues will never be dealt with properly if we do not have proper representation in the structures," said a SADTU Southern Natal region woman member. "If there are not enough women in the union structures, women's demands will be ignored."

Demands

Among the demands that women teachers want to take up are:

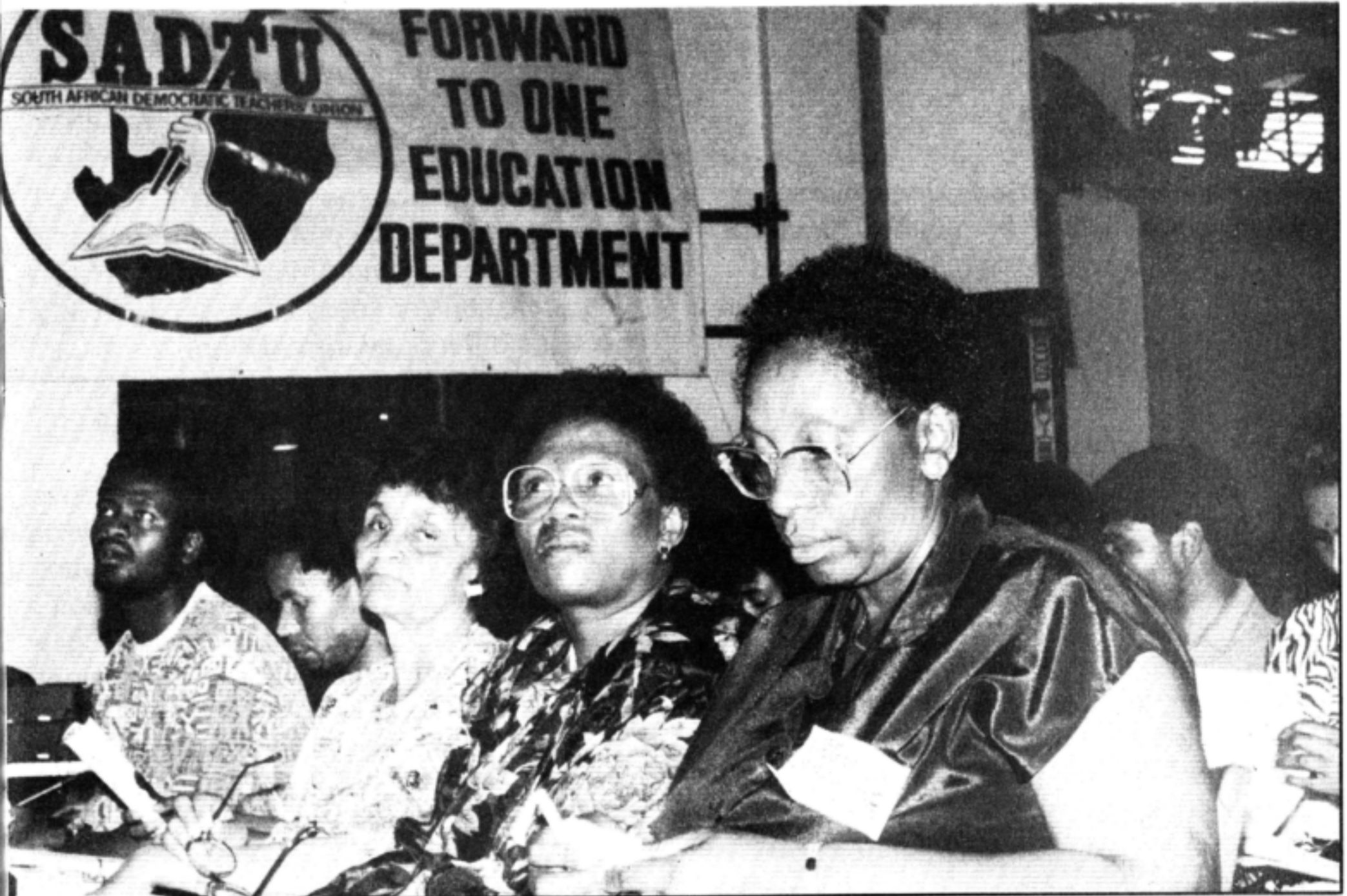
- * Men and women teachers to earn the same salaries.
- * Maternity benefits for all women teachers, married and single.
- * Full pay on maternity leave.
- * Doing away with all forms of discrimination against women in educational institutions and teacher organisations.

These demands, women teachers believe, cannot be taken up properly by men alone because they do not affect them directly.

A long and hard struggle

Women in SADTU realise that the struggle to take their demands forward is not easy.

"It is a lot of work. We need to educate ourselves as women about our oppression because society has made us accept it as normal. We also need to educate men and make them aware that the things they do every day oppress women."



Teachers at the SADTU launch in October 1990. Photo : COSATU

Women teachers have begun a process of educating themselves about the issues that oppress them as women. They recently held a workshop in Durban where they discussed the different ways in which women are oppressed. They also discussed how race, class and cultural oppression makes women's oppression worse.

Empowering women

Women from the Southern Natal region of SADTU say the purpose of the workshops is the education and empowerment of women teachers.

"It is empowering for women to be able to get together and discuss the things that affect them. At these workshops they can open up and get to understand their position. Then when we fight for our rights we know what we are fighting for.

"Women teachers should be taught leadership skills so that women can compete well in a world dominated by men," they say.

What do they mean by competing in the world of men?

"When we say we want to elect women in leadership positions we must be sure that women have the necessary skills. Otherwise men will always dominate because they do have the skills. Women will sit there and not do anything. Then the men will say 'yes, we told you. Women are not capable of being leaders'".

Educate men as well

The women want to make sure that everybody - men and women and especially those who are training to be teachers - understand the way in which women are

Women Teachers

exploited and oppressed. They want to discuss how this can be fought. They want to make sure that reading material about women's oppression and liberation is given out to all educators. They also need to have workshops with men to educate them about these things.

Women teachers are dealing with the question of whether or not men should take part in the coming conference. Some believe that men can take part but just as observers. And that men should not have voting rights.

"This must not be taken as anti-men. We are saying that women need that space of being able to discuss and decide on the things that affect them without being overruled by men," a SADTU woman member said. "We are very serious about making sure that women's issues are kept high on SADTU's agenda".

Many more problems

Teachers face many problems. For example, membership in some African areas in Natal is very weak. It is not easy to organise in Natal because of fear and intimidation.

National Consultative Conference

The theme of SADTU's national consultative conference in July is: 'Empowerment of Women in Education.' The slogan for the conference is 'Empower the women, empower the nation'. At the conference some delegates are going to debate the creation of a position of a woman vice-president for women's matters. Some delegates believe this will ensure a space for women in the higher decision-making structure of the union. Women teachers are strong and determined not to let women's demands slide off the union's agenda. You can forget about them by forgetting about their demands. ♣

South African LABOUR BULLETIN South African LABOUR BULLETIN

S A Labour Bulletin has articles about unions; strikes and other labour action; community issues; and about the politics of the working class. It is read by a wide range of people and is used by unions and other organisations as part of their education programmes.

Subscription rates (send to the address below)

Workers (send copy of payslip)	R20 for eight editions
Students (send copy of student card)	R32 for eight editions
Salaried individuals	R45 for eight editions
Organisations etc	Please contact us for rates

If anyone wishes to help distribute Bulletins by selling them for us, please contact us at the address or phone number below.

SALB P O Box 3851 JHB 2000 Tel: (011) 337 8511



**New
Ground**
A Journal of Development and the Environment
Number 3, March 1991

featuring:

- Lessons of the Nicaraguan Revolution • Squatters •
- Recycling • Green Eye • Production Co-ops •

Subscriptions from: EDA PO Box 322, Newtown, 2113 South Africa.
South Africa and all African countries: R10 for four copies;
single copies R2.85 including GST and postage.

Overseas subscriptions	surface mail	£8	\$15	R25
	airmail	£15	\$25	R55

Name Address

A man without broken hands in the home

Most men do not do housework. This is seen as women's work. Oupa Mmotsa, an activist, does not agree. We spoke to him about his views on housework.



Oupa is married to Ouma. They have two children, a son Tshenolo who is 11 years old and a daughter, Masetshaba who is one year old. They live in the garage at Oupa's mother's home in Mohlakeng, near Randfontein. At home Oupa does some cooking, cleaning, washing up and makes the bed.

Father a big influence

How did Oupa get to be one of those few men who believes that men should do housework? His late father had a big influence on his life. He did housework and that was way back in the 1960's.

"My father saw himself as a father with children to bring up properly and he couldn't expect my mother to do it alone," says Oupa.

"My younger kid brother was born in 1966 and my mother became ill. My father didn't believe that he had to fetch someone to come and help out. He believed he could do it himself. I used to see my father washing napkins."

Oupa's father cooked, cleaned and washed clothes. Oupa also took on responsibilities in the home.

"I'd do things like washing dishes, preparing uniforms for my kid brothers and helped my father to do some cooking and cleaning before I went to school."

Oupa's father was different from other men in the community in the way he treated his wife. He cared for her very much and he never laid a violent hand on her.

Childcare should also be shared

Oupa wants to be close to his children. He wants to enjoy being part of bringing them up and he wants them to grow up believing that housework must be shared. He hopes his son will take after him.

Oupa's daughter is still a baby and wakes often during the night. He and his wife have a shared arrangement to care for the baby. He explains: "We take turns when she wakes up and cries".

Democracy at home

Oupa believes that male comrades should set an example by bringing democracy into their homes. But he finds most of them very disappointing when it comes to practising what they preach in their own homes. Men use tradition as a weapon to fight having to



give up their male privilege in the home. They want to be kings in their homes.

He said: "I have been to homes of many comrades who plainly refuse to do housework. It becomes a big argument. They refuse to do these jobs. They bring tradition into the whole thing."

Change is not easy

Oupa admits that change is not easy. But he firmly believes the problem of sharing housework is a two way thing. He says women feel threatened by the idea.

He says: "Most of our women won't let us do these things. In a way, if you start doing these things they feel threatened. They wonder what you are up to. You have to show your partner that you love her and that you appreciate her ... little gestures can contribute to phasing out what she suspects is a plot against her. But I think from their side too, some contribution has to be made ... They may think 'this guy, okay, he could be trying to topple me but at the same time he could be trying something positive'."

Women are also to blame

Oupa believes women are also to blame for the fact that men don't do housework. Ouma

appreciates his help - but only with housework inside the house. She does not want him to do housework outside in the yard where people can see him.

Says Oupa: "The problem comes when I do washing outside. Like washing napkins, my own clothes or maybe Ouma's clothes, especially underwears and sweeping the yard."

He says Ouma feels ashamed that he should be seen doing these things in the yard. She feels the community will blame her for not being a proper wife. And they will also laugh at Oupa and see him as weak or cowardly and controlled by his wife. Oupa feels these worries are shared by most women.

There are some jobs that Ouma will only let Oupa do when they are alone. "She won't allow me to change the kid's napkin when other people are around. But when they are not around I can do it. Women are looked at as wives and mothers. They have that role to play and they are accepted in the society if they do it well."

Changing roles will take time

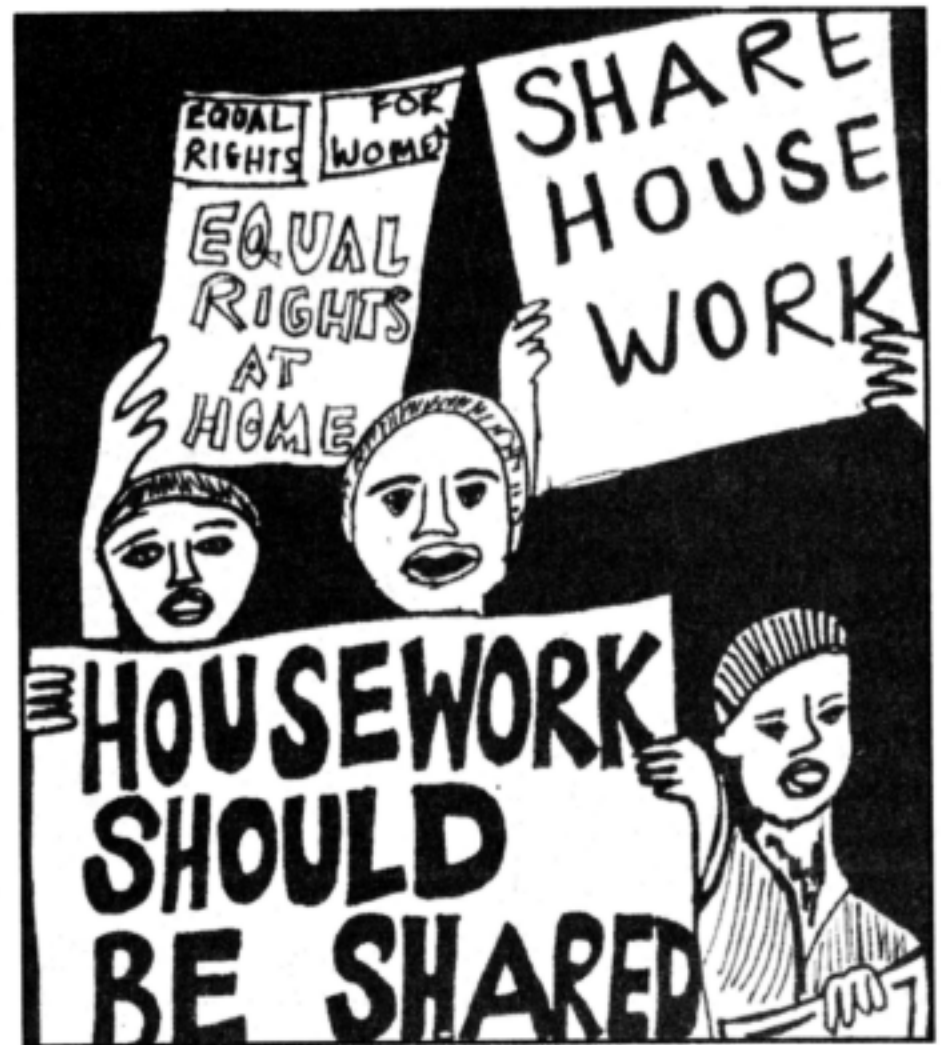
Changing roles for men and women are important, says Oupa, but it will take time to be accepted.

"It's not something that will be achieved overnight, unless more people do it openly," he believes. "You've got to get to the point where your wife won't feel ashamed if the man next door is laughing at you for washing napkins and underwear," says Oupa. Oupa believes both men and women need to be educated.

The problem is that change happens slowly. How can it be speeded up so women aren't tied to the kitchen in the new South Africa?

"I think it will largely depend on people who claim to be activists," said Oupa. He believes that women and men should both be encouraged to do other than traditional tasks both at home and in the community.

"Instead of women doing traditional women's jobs, let us men do them or let us do them together. Women can do things like marshalling and trying to keep order ... Activists who are conservative will start looking at it from a different light and women who are activists won't feel threatened. Another thing is when people preach equality on stage they must be seen putting them into practise.



Message as a male activist

Oupa is positive about the future. He says: "If we can give each other a chance to prove that we can perform duties across the sex line and approach it in a positive attitude, it could build happiness - that little spark of happiness that is not there in the household.

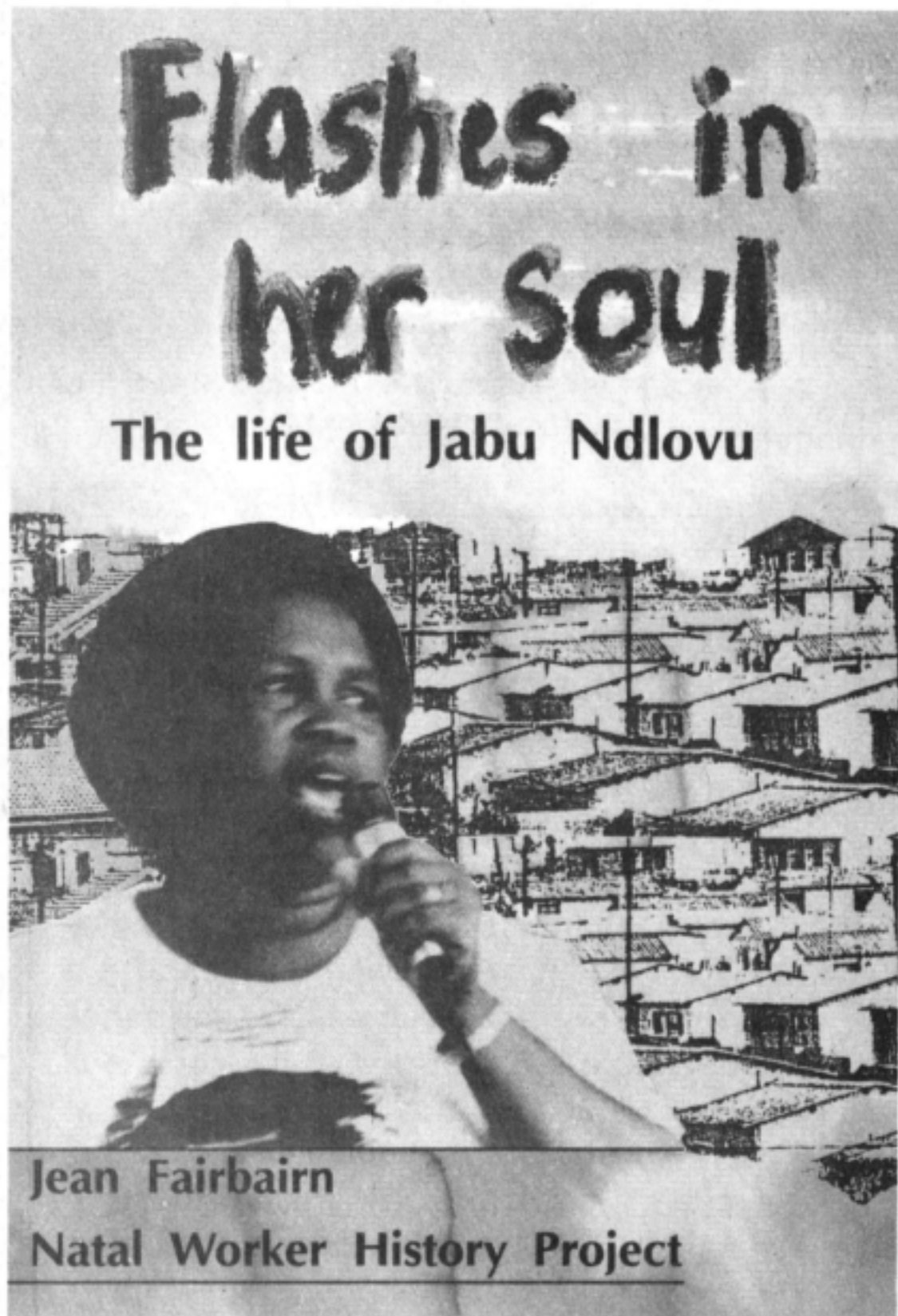
"If my son grows up with the idea of sharing the housework I think his family will benefit a lot in future and he won't, in time of need, look back and feel sorry for himself. He will know that he has hands which are not broken. My wife will gain the satisfaction of knowing that even when she is not there she need not worry about her children. That there is actually a mother and a father in me. I gain the trust and confidence of my family.

"And that's not bad!" smiles Oupa. "Maybe that is what a good marriage is all about. Trying to make a good relationship and not working towards divorce."

Forward to more men taking Oupa's advice! ☺

Flashes in her Soul:

The Life of Jabu Ndlovu



Flashes in her Soul is a book about the life of Jabu Ndlovu a shop steward in the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) and a leader in the community of Imbali. Jabu was assassinated in May 1989. The book was written from interviews with Jabu's friends, comrades and family.

This is both a sad and an inspiring book. It is sad because it is the story of a brave and courageous woman who died in a senseless war. It is inspiring because it offers the reader a rich and detailed story of Jabu's life - the life of a woman who achieved much in a short time.

The book begins with Jabu's life in the rural area of the Natal Midlands. Through the voices of friends, comrades and family - the people who loved and cared for Jabu - the story of Jabu's youth, adolescence and marriage to her childhood lover is told. You learn of Jabu's life and you also get a rich and colourful picture of what it was like to grow up in Nhlanbambkhusi. We are told of the hardships that people suffered and the way in which people managed to survive.

Township life and activism

Jabu moved to Imbali, a township outside Pietermaritzburg and the story shifts there. It tells of Jabu's move to township life and factory work. We are told of how the union - the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU), later to become NUMSA - came to the factory gates and how the union changed Jabu's life. Of how she changed from being a passive and accepting woman into a fighter for justice and freedom for all.

Jabu's life as an activist may have begun with the union, but it did not end there. Her involvement in the community of Imbali meant she became an

important figure there. It was not long before Jabu found herself in the middle of the war that was unfolding in and around the townships of Pietermaritzburg.

The book tells of the hardships that were experienced by Jabu and her family. It tells of how she became a victim of the violence and how her family suffered under the strain of having to live with constant threats on their lives.

The story ends with Jabu's tragic death - a death that robbed the community of Imbali of a courageous and brave woman who sought to fight for freedom and justice for all.

Well worth reading

This book is well worth reading. The story of Jabu's life is told simply and clearly. It is an important book because Jabu's story is in many ways also the story of the lives and experiences of thousands of women in South Africa who struggle and suffer as a result of the war. ☺

My message is to encourage the women to struggle, even if they are not working, to be active within the community. They must help the community, especially the youth - help them when they have got problems. The youth complain that their fathers are not helping, especially on the weekends they go off drinking. So the women must help the youth - they must call meetings and help them plan what to do. - Jabu Ndlovu

Flashes in her Soul: the life of Jabu Ndlovu' was produced by the Natal Worker History Project. The book will also be available in Zulu after June 1991. This review was written by Lacom, Johannesburg. If you would like to buy a copy of the book, send R9.60 to Natal Worker History Project, c/o Sociology Department, University of Natal, King George V Avenue, Durban, Natal, 4001.

As I climbed up the mountain
I expected to see houses
But I saw ashes
I looked up at the sky to ask
the Heavens
About the talented and gifted
people of P.M.Burg

Where is Khopo? I asked
A woman with a mountain
voice
A woman with silky golden
voice
There was no response from
Heavens

Where is Jabu?
A woman with flashes in her
soul
A woman with flashes in her
soul
A woman with fires in her
heart
A woman with lion strength
Again there was no response
from the sky

*from a poem by Makhosi
Khoza from Pietermaritzburg.
The poem is in this book, and
the book takes its name from
this poem.*

De Klerk, stop the ANC Women's League



Hundreds of women protested outside the magistrate's court in Johannesburg to demand an end to the violence. The protest took place on the eve of the ANC ultimatum to the government.

Photo: Dynamic Images

violence!

takes mass action



Above: Women picket the streets of Johannesburg photo : SPEAK
Below: Women sit in at the magistrate's court in Johannesburg
photo : AFRAPIX

African National Congress (ANC) Women's League added their strength to the ANC's May 9 ultimatum to the government by calling for national mass action by women in South Africa on 8 - 10 May 1991 on the issue of violence. They demanded that the state president, F W de Klerk put an end to the violence.

The Women's League took the decision to call for mass action only a few days before 8 May.

Despite the fact that some ANC Women's League branches only had two days to organise, the national mass action was very successful. Firoza Adam, an ANC Women's League member from Johannesburg said it was almost as if women were waiting to act as women.

"People are tired of violence," said Firoza. "They are tired of being the victims or watching other people be the victims of it."

Mass action was aimed mainly at government buildings. The League wanted to make it clear that it is the government's responsibility to end the killings. Pickets, sit-ins, memorandums to foreign embassies and marches took place all over the country.

Places where women mobilised included Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, Pietersburg, Mooi River, Richmond, Brakpan, Nelspruit, Aliwal North and East London. Things did not go easily in many of the places, with reports of arrests and women being turned away.

Police arrested placard-carrying Women's League members outside the Pietersburg Town Council offices. But women were allowed to stage a sit-in at the Pietersburg's security branch offices.

In Pietermatitzburg, women, many of whom wore mourning clothes, occupied the government's Natalia building. In the words of one of the onlookers: "The women were very brave. They were not intimidated. You could see their message loud and clear - enough is enough."

The Women's League then went straight to the city hall in Pietermaritzburg to speak to the mayor, Pat Rener, who is a woman. She was at the Royal Show in town. The women demanded she be fetched to come and see them. When she arrived women appealed to her as "a woman, a mother and a sister" to do all in her power to stop the violence.

In Port Elizabeth, Women's League members were on the move in what is called a 'Flying Picket'. This means they held short demonstrations for about 10 to 15 minutes at different police stations. In this way they covered at least five police stations before being stopped by police.



Women outside Johannesburg magistrate's court

Photo: Dynamic Images

In Johannesburg, women picketed outside the magistrates court while about 80 women 'sat in' in the building. As with most of the action taken throughout the country, women handed over a memorandum addressed to the state president.

Women in Durban marched to the Department of Home Affairs to occupy the building. They were not allowed to enter the building but the mood outside was lively. There was lots of toyi-toying, singing and dancing. People passing by and construction workers from nearby buildings joined in giving their support to the women.

The women were arrested, but not without a fight. They gave the police a very hard time. The police vans were rocking with the women singing and dancing inside. The women were later released. They had made their point.



Women in Durban give police a hard time photo : AFRAPIX



What is the message?

We spoke to a few women picketing outside the Jo'burg magistrates court about the reason for the action. They spoke of the terrible life of fear and bloodshed. They spoke about husbands, sons, daughters and sisters being killed. They said they demand that traditional weapons be taken away. One woman said: "We are here to bring public awareness to the spate of violence and the government involvement in it although they are denying it. We are saying loud and clear they must stop the violence."

Another said, "The government must stop the violence. de Klerk and his regime have got the power to stop the violence with the aid of the SAP and SADF. No negotiations will take place until the violence has been stopped. The government must disarm Inkatha - they carry dangerous weapons which are referred to as 'traditional weapons'. If the government can stop the violence then we can proceed with negotiations."

If the violence does not stop, the Women's League will continue to take action. Firoza Adam said: "There is a sense of determination to use the power we have as women to make a contribution to end the violence. It was the beginning, not the end, of action by women on violence nationally." Given the success of the Women's League action, this can be believed. ☪

We have a dream young women talk

Teachers are very much part of promoting sexism in the schools often without being aware of it. A group of young women attending Khanya College speak about this.

Girls are at a big disadvantage at school. In class they are expected to behave like 'ladies' and keep quiet. Teachers usually encourage boys to answer questions and be active in the classroom. Boys make more noise and are dominant in the classroom. This is accepted by most teachers.

Another big disadvantage and problem for girls is that some male teachers try to take advantage of female students by demanding sexual favours. This puts girls at a further disadvantage to boys.

Teachers frown on boys who let the girls do better



than them in tests, exams and homework. They say to them 'how can you let a girl do better than you?' This promotes the idea that boys are naturally cleverer than girls.

Girls are encouraged to become nurses and teachers whereas boys are encouraged to be engineers, doctors and lawyers.

A small wonder

It is a wonder that any young

black women survive both Bantu education and sexist education to go on to study further. SPEAK met just such a special group of women. These young women did not accept the way they were treated. Each one of them from a young age questioned the idea that certain games and subjects at school were natural for boys and others for girls. They rebelled against the idea that boys were better than girls. They are all

attending Khanya College this year and plan to go to university next year.

A young rebel

Kesia Thobokey wants to enter the medical field. She says she always enjoyed doing outdoor activities as a child. "When I was in pre-school I used to play with tyres and climb the high stairs. Most girls used to play at being nurses and such things. The matron and the child-sitter knew that I hated playing the games where I had to be a mother. I used to like playing with boys. At school I was in the softball team, and you know most softball players professionally are boys." The young women spoke of the division of labour at school between boys and girls. The girls' jobs were inside and the boys' jobs outside. Nodabheko Smile who wants to be an accountant tells: "At school, when the classes were over, the girls were taught to sweep the floors and then the boys were sent to the garden."

The subjects at school were also different for boys and girls. And it wasn't easy as a student to challenge this sexism. Nomonde Mthukwana intends becoming an accountant. She remembers: "At school we did handcraft knitting and sewing whilst the boys were doing

gardening. Even their handwork was different from ours. They used to carve wood and make chairs and things. I did not like knitting and sewing. I remember when I was nine years old and we were crocheting, mine was smaller than the other girls'. The teacher said to me 'you are so lazy, what kind of a woman are going to become in future if you are this lazy?'

"I couldn't answer her back because she was a teacher. But I said to her 'I'd like to do woodwork as well.' She said: 'You are crazy, this is a boy's job.'"

Learning to lose

Principals and teachers are also to blame for having a negative attitude towards girls. For teaching them to take second place. Nandipha Manyela intends becoming a

Some of the students interviewed
Photo: SPEAK



social worker. She says: "At primary level they used to separate the girls from boys. Most of the time the boys dominated the class. The teachers told only the boys to clean the board. The girls had to remain passive while the boys were answering questions, doing very active work in the class.

Sometimes when we wrote a test the girls got higher marks than the boys. The teacher would say to the boys: 'You are stupid, you can never let a girl go above you.' There was that attitude that girls have to be below boys all the time."

Girls are taught that boys are stronger. As Bonggi, who wants to become a social worker, says: "When I was at school especially when we were in class and the teacher wanted to write something on the board it was the boys who had to stand up and clean the

We have a dream

board.”

Schools teach girls to take second place in life. But some girls fight these ideas.

Dreams

All of these young women say that what has got them where they are in life now was having a dream and following it. “You only reach your goal if you are well-motivated and have self-discipline,” they said.

“You have to believe there is nothing that you can't do. I believed I was better than boys. I rebelled against the idea that boys are stronger,” added Bonggi.

Many girls are pushed into a career, not of their wishes, but because of the attitude of society towards women.

When she was at school Nomonde dreamed of being a doctor. “When I grew up I used to say: ‘I want to be a doctor’. But my friends used to discourage me. They said: ‘No, why do you want to be a doctor? You have to be a nurse, that is a woman's job, if you are a boy you have to grow up and be a doctor.’”

It was not this attitude that prevented her. It was the fact that there was no equipment at school for the experiments in physical science. Bantu education smashed her dream.

Teachers can help to make or break your dreams. Those teachers who are aware of how the system keeps girls down can be part of



challenging the system.

Each one of the young women had been encouraged by at least one teacher to follow their dream. Their parents had also supported and encouraged them. They were lucky. Many parents tell their daughters not to waste money by getting further education. And many teachers pay more attention to boys' dreams than girls'.

Do you help to destroy dreams?

How many women engineers, doctors or construction workers do you know? Not many? Most people play a role in telling girls what they should or shouldn't become because they are female. Do you also promote sexism by telling young girls to see their place as being in the kitchen instead of in the world?

The Khanya students have a message for other young women. They say: Have confidence in yourself. Have a goal. Follow your dream. Believe in yourself. ☺

AGENDA

Forum on Women's Liberation



In April 1991 representatives of major political organisations were asked by Agenda, a Durban-based women's journal, to take part in a forum discussion about 'Women in South African Society'.

The African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP), Workers Organisation of South Africa (WOSA), Azanian Peoples' Organisation (AZAPO) and Inkatha all took part.

Having all these organisations present on one platform was an important step towards bringing about political tolerance and debate.

Some agreement

All the organisations agreed South African society is sexist, oppressive and unequal to women - and that something has to be done to change it. They all also agreed that women's liberation would not come about just through the struggle for national liberation or socialism.

Some of the views raised Nkosazana Zuma of the ANC put it this way: "Rights are never given, they are won through struggle." She said the ANC wants to build a democratic South Africa where all people can participate equally in decision-making and where all people have equal access to resources - men and women, black and white.

Rita Edwards of WOSA said that there is a need for an independent women's organisation. This, she felt, should be closely aligned to the workers' struggle.

Nosiswe Mdlala from the SACP pointed out that while the government has accepted that racial laws should be done away with, the system of class and women's oppression is still with us.

Strini Moodley of AZAPO, the only man on the panel, said that AZAPO believes that capitalism caused the beginning of women's oppression.

Faith Gasa of Inkatha Freedom Party said they believe women have the task

of maintaining human values in a society that is being destroyed by violence of all kinds. She also said it is important for women to become involved in politics and to have training in this.

There were lots of questions from the people at the meeting. Most questions were about violence against women, polygamy, culture, lobola. All the organisations agreed things should change but they did not say what their plan of action is for changing women's position in society.

Lots of thinking still to do

It is clear there is still a lot of thinking and planning to be done by all political organisations, otherwise the needs and aspirations of women will not be taken seriously. It is not enough to have a clause in the new constitution saying women must be treated as equals, or to talk about a future non-sexist South Africa. There is a need for concrete policies, planning and action. ☛

Today it's me, tomorrow

"Today it's me, tomorrow it's someone else" - these are the words from a song by Ugandan singer Philly Lutaya who spent his last days making people in Uganda aware about AIDS.

Philly Lutaya played an important part in making Ugandans aware of AIDS and in helping to make Ugandans face up to the problem. Dorothy Kawesi of Uganda spoke about this at the 6th International Women's Health Meeting held in the Philippines in November 1990. She showed a video about this famous Ugandan man and singer who took the brave step of telling the world he had AIDS.

Dorothy said, "In the beginning people refused to believe there was such a disease. They said it was witchcraft. But later the Ugandan government came out in the open and said to the world and ourselves 'we have AIDS,' said Dorothy. "Journalists did a great job," she said, "they talked about AIDS in the newspapers and in the different languages of the people. They played a role in educating the people. But one of the most powerful educators about AIDS was Philly, a famous Ugandan singer, who himself had AIDS."

Born in Africa

Philly was a well-known musician in Uganda. His songs were known all over. He left Uganda to carry on his singing career in Sweden, Europe. He sang a song called "Born in Africa," which was a great hit song in Uganda. It was a song that brought hope to the country after many years of suffering under civil war and brutal governments.

But then Philly discovered he was HIV-positive and that he would die from AIDS.

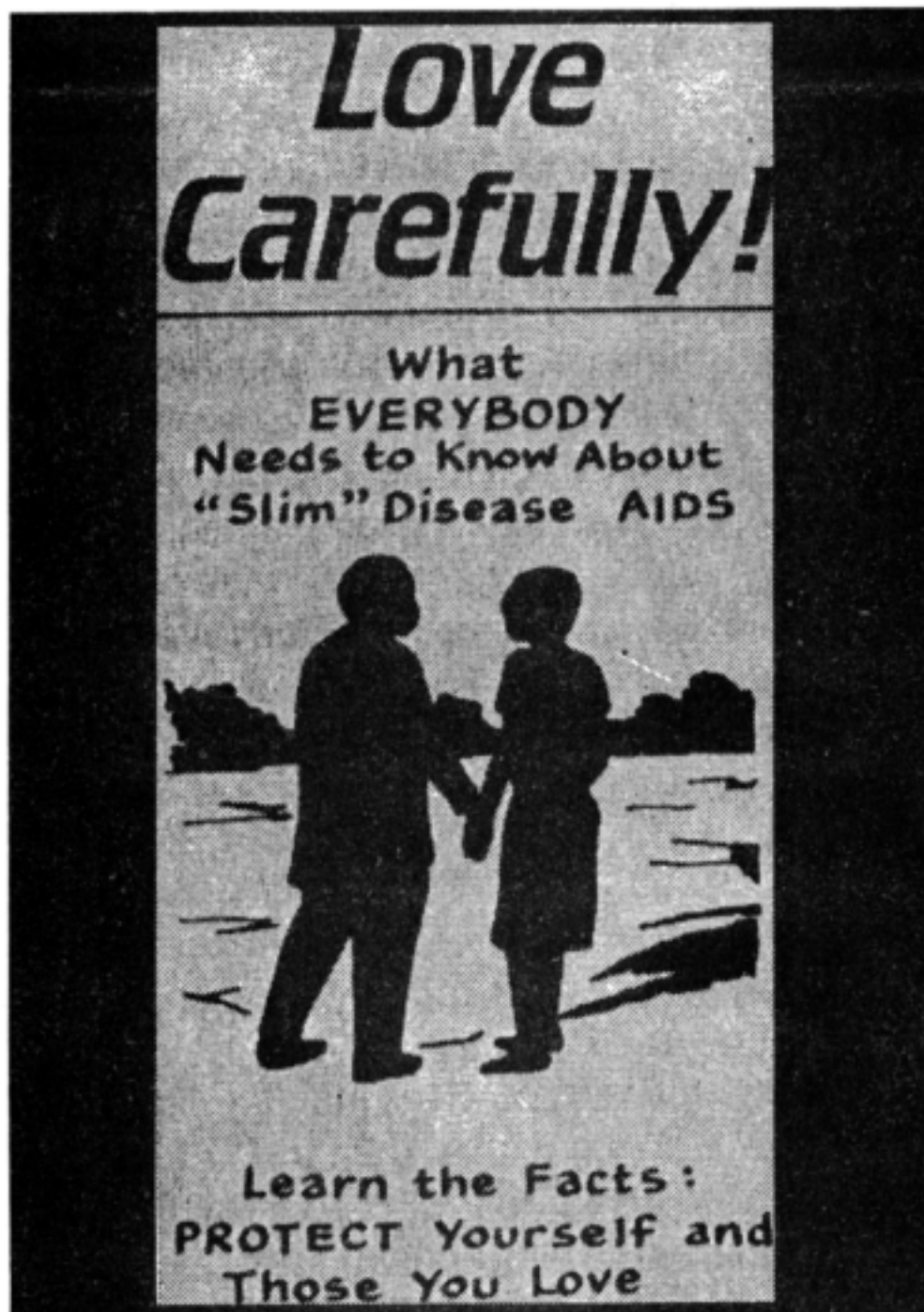


Posters on AIDS from UGANDA

Philly could have kept quiet about it. But instead he decided to use his talent as a singer to tell other people about the killer disease. This is what he said: "I was afraid. I knew I was in trouble. I felt so alone. I decided to come out into the open. To start a crusade to see if I could save lives."

Philly's brother was shocked when he discovered his brother wanted to tell the world about having AIDS. But Philly went ahead. He wanted to save lives. At this time Philly looked healthy. No-one would have said, by looking at him, that he had a deadly disease. When Philly came out in public and said that he had AIDS it was like a bombshell. It was a big story. At first the news was dealt with in dignity. People

it's someone else



The Ugandan Government started to take AIDS seriously only after thousands had died.

were compassionate. But then things went bad. People started to say he told the story so that more people would buy his records. People said that it was western powers trying to make some money. He was badly shaken by the way things turned on him. He decided to fight back. He wanted to make a speech at the university in Uganda. It was a chance he wanted to take. He was worried that nobody would believe him. He gave the speech, and it went down well. In his heart, Philly knew that the time would come when people would understand the truth.

But then Philly began to get very sick. He had sores and he lost the feeling in some parts of his body. He had bad headaches, diarrhoea

and TB. By September 1989 he had at least five infections which his body could not fight back because he had AIDS.

He tried to get his strength back. He started to work on his music in Stockholm, Sweden where he was being cared for. He wanted to work on the most important song of his life. His song about AIDS. He wanted to go back to Uganda to sing and to make a film. The song was called 'Alone' and these are some of the words:

'Out there somewhere
Alone and frightened
Today it's me, tomorrow it's someone else.'

By this time, Philly could not stand because of the sores on his feet. His doctors did not believe that he could make it back to Uganda. But he managed to build up his strength and walk again. He had the will to fight the disease and he felt like he was getting his strength back. By this time he wore dark glasses most of the time. He was very, very thin and he had lost a lot of his hair. He could only walk with great pain. He was no longer the young fit-looking man that he was when he first discovered that he had AIDS. As a single parent, going back to Uganda was a difficult decision. It meant leaving his children behind.

Philly was able to give his final message to Uganda and the world about AIDS. He went around the country, speaking to people and singing his song about AIDS. He told the people that they must understand what AIDS is really about, and how important it is to prevent it spreading. "Today it's me, tomorrow it's someone else," he sang.

Philly died in Uganda in 1990. He died having offered Ugandans and the world a strong message: AIDS is real. You die from it. Anybody can get AIDS. Do all you can to stop the spread of AIDS. ♣

Value Added Tax (VAT)

What is it?

Tax is a touchy subject, with good reason. Taxpayer's money in South Africa has gone into paying assassination squads like the CCB as well as into helping privileged whites become more privileged, like in white education.

The government is changing to a new tax system from 30 September 1991. It is called Value Added Tax (VAT). It will take the place of General Sales Tax (GST) which is 13%. VAT will be 12%. This is a much higher amount than many people expected.

Why does a government need to tax?

Any government needs money to run a country. They need to pay for things like roads, education, salaries for government employees, like teachers and post office employees and other services for the people of the country.

The government also needs money to pay for pensions, unemployment insurance, disability grants and other kinds of social security. In South Africa at present these kinds of welfare benefits for the people are very little.

VAT is a system that is used by more than 45 countries in the world. In many of those countries the welfare benefits available to people are far better than here.

Many people pay tax to the government on their salaries. But that money is not enough to run a country. So the government needs to tax people in other ways. The South African government has money problems right now. They want to find a way of solving this. They believe VAT is the way because with GST many people managed to get away without paying it.

Together with income tax and other taxes, VAT will be used by the government to pay for running the country.

What is GST?

GST is what is called a retail sales tax. In other words, GST is paid by a person buying something over the counter.



VAT

VAT is different to GST because VAT is paid in stages along the line of producing and using things. And each person can claim the VAT they have paid back from the Receiver of Revenue, except for the last person who pays it - you, the consumer.

With VAT you have to go back to the very beginning. Let's say you buy a table. You have to think right back to where the table comes from - a forest.

A person who makes planks from logs of wood will buy the wood from a forester. The plank-maker will pay 12% on top of the price of the wood to the forester. This is the VAT charge. She will then go off and make planks. The forester does not keep this VAT money paid to her by the plank-maker. The forester will send off the VAT amount to the Receiver of Revenue (the tax man).

The plank-maker will then sell planks to the person who makes furniture. The furniture-maker pays the plank-maker 12% VAT on top of the price of the planks. Before the plank-maker sends the VAT paid to her by the furniture-maker to the Receiver of Revenue she keeps back the VAT amount she paid to the forester.

So the plank-maker gets back the VAT she paid out to the forester.

The furniture-maker takes the planks and makes tables and sells one of them to you. When you buy your table you will pay 12% VAT on top of the cost of the table. Before the furniture-maker sends the VAT you paid to her to the Receiver of Revenue she keeps back the VAT she paid to the plank-maker.

The only person who cannot claim VAT back from the Receiver of Revenue is you, the consumer.

What does VAT mean for poor people?

VAT is going to be charged on many things and services that are not taxed under the GST system.

Tax on food

Under the GST system the government did not charge tax on important foodstuffs like bread, milk, meat, fresh vegetables and mielie meal. With VAT all of the things are going to be taxed except for brown bread and mielie meal. VAT is really bad news for poor people who cannot afford to buy food as it is. Even though we will pay 12% instead of 13%, we will be paying that 12% on many more things than before.

Tax on services

Services were not taxed under GST. But now services will be taxed under VAT. Here are some of the services that will be taxed: electricity, water, telephone, postage stamps, accountants and lawyers fees, petrol, land, electricians and plumbers.

What is the difference between GST and VAT?

With GST people could not claim it back from the Receiver of Revenue. GST is simpler to understand. When you go to the shop you know that you will have to pay 13% tax on the money that is marked on the goods. But VAT is like a hidden tax because the price on the item will include VAT. This is called an 'inclusive' tax. VAT will not be added on at the till. Instead it will be included in the price you see marked on things. In

other words 'the price you see is the price you pay.' People may even forget they are paying tax on the things they buy.

One good thing about the VAT system is that we will no longer have to pay tax on second-hand things.

Fight for what you want

When the government first announced it was going to introduce VAT many municipalities - mainly white - all over the country held public meetings and protested about paying VAT on rates. They also made representations to the government. Due to this public pressure the government has agreed to drop VAT on rates.

The government has also agreed to allow certain bosses in certain industries not to pay VAT. For example, some bosses will not have to pay VAT on machinery they buy. In the past they paid GST on these things. This shows the government looks after the interests of the bosses and not the workers of South Africa.

Tax in a future South Africa

We need a government we can trust. We need to be sure that our tax is not going to pay projects which aim at killing people, like the CCB. We also need to make sure that our money does not support elements which destabilise our neighbours, like Mozambique. It is true that the South African government is short of money. But it is no secret that even the little money that is there is not used properly. Apartheid education alone means there are 17 different education departments which cost a lot of money to run. We should not have to pay for apartheid. We need a government that is accountable to the people. We need to see the fruits of the tax we pay.☺

Thanks to Trade Union Research Project (TURP) for information. TURP has produced pamphlets explaining VAT written in both English and Zulu. The pamphlets are free of charge. If you want to get one, write to: TURP, Sociology Department, King George V Avenue, University of Natal, Durban, 4001.

IT'S A STRANGE WORLD,

TIME FOR A SMOKE BREAK!

ISN'T IT!



VOLUME 20
NUMBER 7
NOVEMBER 1990

off our backs

\$2 a women's newsjournal



off our backs, a women's news journal, just celebrated its 20th birthday. We hope you'll join us for our third decade of news, reviews, commentaries - the best in feminist journalism!

subscribe today

11 issues a year: \$17

Canada, Mexico: US\$18

Overseas, all airmail: US\$25, UK£16

Trial sub: 3 issues for \$5

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

oob, 2423 18th St. Wash.DC. 20009

For the past twelve years, **Work in Progress** has provided incisive political and economic commentary and information on Southern African developments and opposition to apartheid.

Work in Progress, an independent analytical journal, has become an indispensable source of information and argument, widely respected among many who are likely to formulate South Africa's options in the new era.

Subscription rates 1991

Rates for 8 issues

South Africa

Individuals, trade unions and community organisations R38

Companies, libraries and institutions R104

Donor subscriptions R104

Southern Africa

Individuals, trade unions and community organisations R50

Companies, libraries and institutions R115

Donor subscriptions R115

Send subscriptions to: Southern African Research Service, PO Box 32716, Braamfontein 2017.

WORK IN

PROGRESS

South Africa's
leading political magazine

Preventing pregnancy - with an Intra-uterine device (IUD)

There are many different ways to prevent pregnancy. In other issues of SPEAK we have written about the Pill, injections, condoms and diaphragms. Here we discuss the Intra-uterine device (IUD), also known as the loop.

The IUD is a contraceptive that is used by women. It is fitted into a woman's womb. It has to be fitted by a specially trained health worker.

An IUD can be very convenient to use. Most women who use it do not have problems. But if you decide you want to use an IUD it is important to know that they can cause serious side-effects. You need to know what can go wrong so that if it does you can do something about it before it becomes serious.

How does an IUD work?

An IUD is a small piece of plastic with long nylon threads attached to it. Most of the IUDs used these days have a thin thread of copper wire wrapped around the plastic. There are different types. The IUD makes the lining of the womb change. It changes in such a way that an egg that has been fertilised by sperm cannot settle in the lining of the womb. Copper IUD's also kill sperm before they reach the egg.

IUDs in the past

There have been many different types of IUDs in the past. Some used to be bigger and could be left in the womb for many, many years. There was also an IUD called the Dalkon Shield which caused many problems. Many women developed serious complications and seventeen women died because of such complications. The Dalkon Shield is now off the market.



The new IUDs

The newer IUDs with copper thread are much smaller than the older plastic loops. These IUDs have to be changed every 5 years because the copper slowly dissolves from the loop.

How is an IUD fitted?

An IUD has to be fitted by someone who is specially trained because it has to be done very gently and carefully.

The health worker will explain how the IUD works. She will examine the woman to check the shape and size of her womb. She will slide a metal instrument called a speculum into the woman's vagina. When the speculum is opened the health worker can see the cervix, also known as the neck of the womb, at the top of the vagina. A small clamp is put onto the cervix so

it can be held still. Some women don't feel this happen, but others get an unpleasant feeling when the clamp is put on.

The health worker will then measure the size and shape of the womb with a long thin metal stick which she will insert through the woman's vagina.

The IUD is then fitted by sliding it up a thin tube which is pushed through the cervix. While the IUD is in the tube it is squashed up but once it is in the womb it will open out.

Bring someone with you

When the IUD is fitted many women feel a cramping pain. Some women feel faint and a bit sick after the IUD is put in. Other women feel very little pain with the IUD fitting. It is a good idea to sit down for half an hour after the IUD has been fitted. Bring a friend or partner who will take you home afterwards in case you feel faint.

What to expect

You may get bleeding and a few cramps for a day or so after the IUD is fitted. This is caused by the womb getting used to the loop. This should not go on for long. You can check that the loop is in place by putting your fingers inside your vagina to feel for the threads that are attached to the IUD. It is best to do this after a period. The health worker will explain how to do it.



Sometimes the womb will try to get rid of the loop. This is most common during the first two or three months. It usually happens during a woman's period. It is important to keep an eye out for this and to check that the threads are still in place.

When is the best time to fit an IUD?

It is best to fit an IUD at the end of a period because the womb is very relaxed at this time.

What to check for before you fit an IUD

It is important that you do not have an infection when you have the IUD fitted. This is because the infection will more easily travel along the threads and into the womb. The health worker should check for infection.

If you think you may have caught an infection after the IUD is fitted, you should go to your doctor or clinic for a check-up.

Can any woman use an IUD?

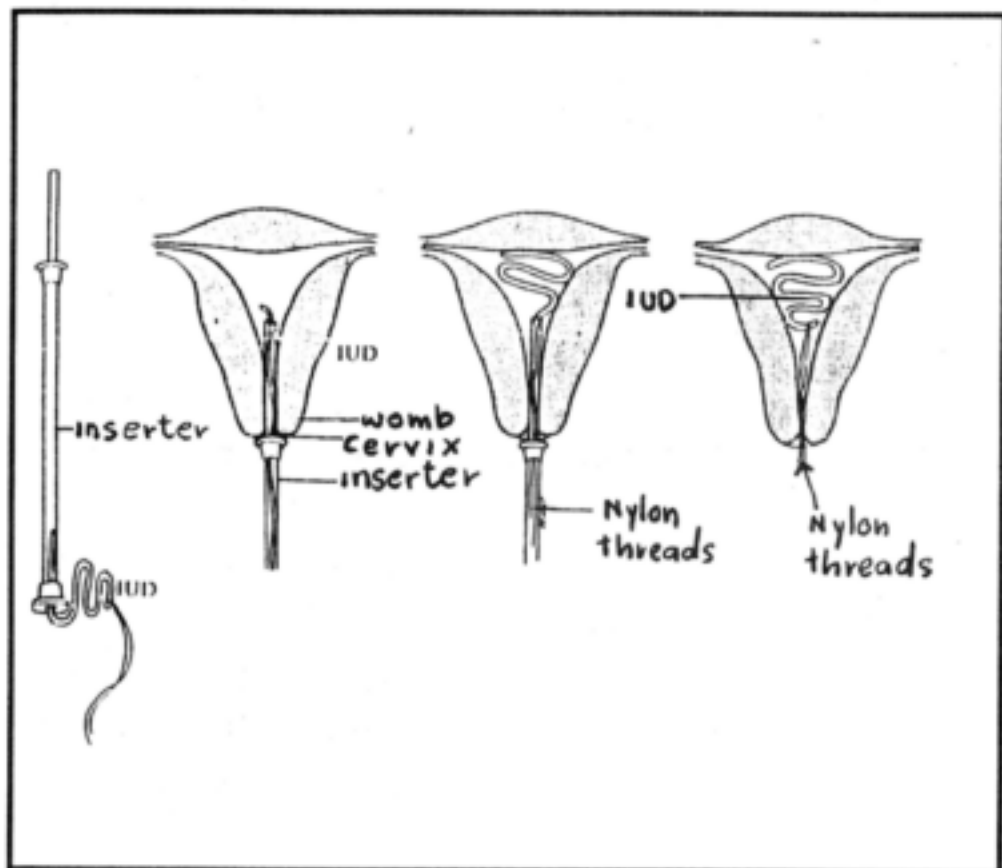
The IUD is a good method of prevention for women who have had a baby and have never had an infection in their tubes or ovaries before. But some women should not use an IUD. These are:

- * Women who have more than one sexual partner or who change their partners often should not have an IUD. These women are at risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease which is more likely to cause infertility if they have an IUD.

- * Teenagers and women who have never been pregnant before should not have an IUD.

- * Women who have had an ectopic pregnancy should not have an IUD. An ectopic pregnancy happens when the egg meets the sperm in the tube and instead of moving down the tube into the womb, it stays in the tube and starts to grow there. This is very dangerous. If a woman feels bad pain on one side and she has missed her period she should go to her doctor or clinic straight away.

- * Women with irregular periods should not have an IUD. Tell the doctor or clinic staff if you do not have regular periods. Let them find out why this is happening.



Putting an IUD in

- * Women with painful heavy periods should not have an IUD.
- * Women who have cancer of the cervix should not have an IUD.
- * Women who have problems with their womb should not have an IUD.
- * If you have a heart problem you must tell the health workers about it because it may not be a good idea to have an IUD.

If you have recently had a baby, a miscarriage or an abortion you should wait a month or so before you have an IUD fitted. This is so your womb can settle down a bit first. Do not let a health worker fit an IUD without your consent.

How is the IUD removed?

Although having your IUD removed is easier than having it put in, it must be done by someone who is trained. NEVER TRY TO REMOVE YOUR IUD YOURSELF. This is dangerous.

To remove the IUD the health worker puts the speculum in your vagina and gently pulls on the threads. The IUD usually comes out easily, giving you a little cramp as it comes out. Sometimes IUDs can be difficult to remove. It could be that the lining of the womb has begun to grow around the IUD. Or

you may need to have an anaesthetic so that the doctor can remove the IUD.

Are there any problems with IUD's?

There can be problems with an IUD but most women who have an IUD do not have problems.

What are the problems?

- * Normal discharge gets heavier. If it does not smell and you have no pain there is nothing to worry about.
- * Periods can be heavier and more painful. There may be spotting at other times of the month. Spotting is when you bleed from the vagina and it is not your period time.
- * Sometimes the threads can get pulled up into the womb. If you cannot feel the threads you may not know whether the IUD has come out or if the threads have moved up into the womb. You must go to a health worker who will help you to find out what the problem is. This may be done with an X-ray or a sonar. If the IUD is still there you can be given an anaesthetic if you decide you want the IUD taken out.
- * The womb may try to push the IUD out and you may get cramps and may feel the IUD sticking out of the cervix. Go to your clinic or doctor for a check-up straight away if you feel this happening.
- * Infection of the womb and tubes is more common in women who have an IUD. This can cause pain, discomfort and fever. But some infections cause no symptoms at all. Infections like these can cause blockage of the tubes and stop you from having babies later on. If you have any signs of infections go straight to your clinic or doctor for a check-up.
- * If you have an IUD and you do get pregnant there is a higher chance than normal of having an ectopic pregnancy. Watch out for bad pain on one side or a missed period. If this happens go straight to your clinic or doctor for a check-up.

* The IUD can make a hole in the womb and move to another part of your body. If this happens you would feel pain and would not be able to feel the threads in your vagina. This usually happens very soon after the IUD is fitted. This does not happen to many women. Go straight to a doctor or clinic.

What to remember if you have an IUD

Listen to your body. If you get very bad backache, serious pain that does not go away, miss your period, have big blood clots or pain during sex, or fever please go straight to a health worker for a check-up.

Check regularly for the threads of your IUD to make sure it is still in place. Go back for a check-up anyway after 6 weeks of having your IUD fitted. Thereafter if you do not have any problems go once a year. Have your PAP smear test for cervical cancer at the same time.

How safe is an IUD?

Out of every 100 women who use an IUD about 2 or 3 women will get pregnant each year. If you do get pregnant and you have an IUD it is safer to have it removed, but this can only be done before 3 months of pregnancy. There is a chance that you may miscarry after the IUD is removed. You would have to discuss the situation with a health worker who should explain the risks to you.

What are the advantages of an IUD?

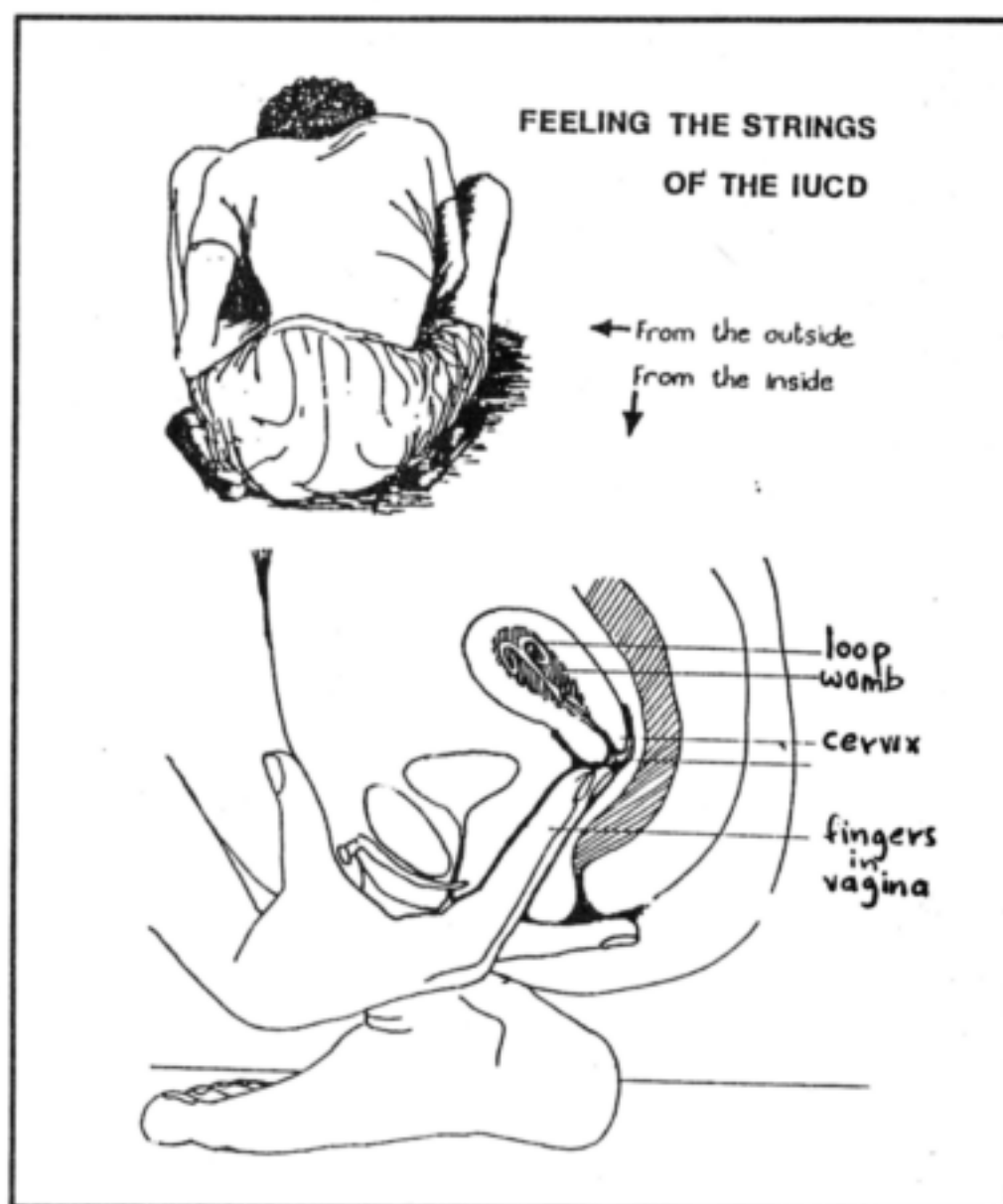
We have spoken a lot about problems that can happen with an IUD. The IUD can suit many women. These are the advantages of an IUD:

* Once an IUD is in your womb you do not have to worry about prevention apart from checking for your threads each month.

* If the IUD is not causing any problems you need to go to your clinic or doctor once a year for a check-up.

* As long as the threads don't irritate your partner's penis the IUD does not interfere with sex. Maybe tell your partner that a bit of irritation

SPEAK



is not much to suffer since you are taking the big responsibility of prevention for both of you!

* As long as you don't get an infection an IUD won't stop your getting pregnant in the future.

Where can you get an IUD?

You can get IUD's free from state family planning clinics. Planned Parenthood Association charges R15.00 for the Dalccept UID and R40.00 for Nova T. They will discuss any problems or issues about contraception that you would like to know. Some private doctors also fit IUD's. This will probably cost about R90.00 for the IUD and the visit.

Taking contraception

If and when you decide you want to use contraception remember that you need information about all kinds before you make a decision. Discuss it with health workers, friends and your partner. Demand information. Your body belongs to you. Every health worker who is involved in contraception must look at you as a whole person and take your health very seriously. This is your right. Demand it. ☺

Subscribe to SPEAK

The first six subscriptions in response to this advert will get a free copy of a book on the struggle of women in S.A.

Make sure you get SPEAK regularly!
Subscribe today and we will post you SPEAK . Send us your name and address, together with your payment for six issues of SPEAK to P.O.Box 45213, Mayfair 2018, Johannesburg

Name.....

Address.....

I enclose.....as payment

Subscription rates for six issues are:
South Africa: individuals R12.,
donors: R30., institutions: R30.
Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland :R18.
Overseas:individual:US\$25,
donor:US\$50, institution: US\$50

Order SPEAK in bulk at our special bulk rates.

For orders of 10 or more, within South Africa we will pay half the postage costs and let you have SPEAK at a special price of R1.10 a magazine.

For 10 magazines send R 13.00

For 20 magazines send R 24.50

For 50 magazines send R 58.50

For 100 magazines send R116.00

Name.....

Address.....

Please send memagazines

I enclose R.....for my order.



**Women Together
are Powerful**



**Women Together
are Powerful**