

SPEAK

5/52

AUGUST 1993

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No. 52

**PRIZES
TO WIN!**

**When
he's
got
more
than
one
wife**

BRIGALIA BAM

A challenge in the church

SANGOMAS FIGHT AIDS



9 771019 137001

What do people say about SPEAK?

"I think SPEAK magazine is a women's liberator because it is the powerful women's voice and always upholds the women's struggle at heart. I strongly call on other magazines and journals to follow SPEAK."

Elizabeth Thabethe, Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU), Germiston

"SPEAK magazine is the voice of the oppressed women especially the black working class women because it lets them speak for themselves; it speaks in a manner meaningful and understandable to them, it highlights their needs and aspirations."

Thenjiwe Mthintso, South African Communist Party, Marshalltown

"SPEAK is an important magazine. It is one of the few publications which dares to present interesting and relevant stories of women. They are not gossip, not fairy tale, not make believe. They are real life stories of so-called 'ordinary' women. As their stories get printed and get known, one realises they are not ordinary at all."

Lota Bertulfo, Asean Women in Development Forum, Cebu City, Phillipines

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Elmond Jiyane

Dynamic Images

COMMENT

The months ahead offer us as South African women the opportunity to challenge our position in society.

As we get closer to the first democratic elections, women should pressurise organisations and parties to see women's rights as human rights. These rights must be protected in the constitution of the new South Africa.

Our situation is unique. We are involved in a process that will result in a complete change of government. The South African government, under the Nationalist Party, had racism as part of its constitution.

The negotiation process will require systematic changes in almost all institutions in our country. This opens the way for women to seek the structural changes that will transform our society into a non-sexist one.

The protests by women about the low number of women involved in the negotiating process saw many organisations and parties include women in their delegations. However, this is only the beginning. Every person must have basic human rights. This should be so for women and men, adults and children. But, women's rights are often ignored because we are viewed as second-class citizens.

Without making sure basic human rights apply to everyone we cannot expect to have justice, peace and freedom.

Talk Back

Thanks to all our readers who have written. Please keep your letters flowing in. We are often forced to shorten letters because of space.

**Send your letters to
SPEAK
PO Box 261363
Excom 2023
Johannesburg
South Africa**

Mogwase women need support

I am living in Bophuthatswana and would like to urge COSATU and all womens' organisations to take up arms against the harsh and humiliating conditions which women workers in Mogwase Bodirelo Industrial Centre are working under. Some women are employed at Mogwase from the age of 14. They have to travel long distances to work, are treated like animals and are paid in sweets. They have no shoulder to cry on and have no means of complaining about their situation. It is difficult to organise them and too dangerous for them to speak about their terrible working conditions because they are afraid of being harassed by

the Bophuthatswana Police. Please help our poor sisters and mothers.

Concerned Bop Resident

A fair and square magazine

Thanks for your fair and square magazine. Most of my pals are paralysed. When I bought SPEAK they smacked me in the face. They say sexist things like women were born to be under men in three ways: politically, religiously and culturally.

It is my view that men and women are oppressed by this regime. There can be no genuine liberation without womens' liberation. "You touch a woman you touch grinding stones".

*Yours in the struggle
Fanyana Mngxitamo*

AZAYO member, Potchefstroom

Looking for my brother

Please help me find my brother. His name is Nicholas Musa Dube. He is from Mjubatuba in the district of Kwankombose. We need him at home urgently. If he gets this message he can phone us on (035) 550 0580. Thank you

Mr Jacki Kitta Dlamini



DP defends position

As the organiser of the meetings for domestic workers organised by the Democratic Party, I am forced to question the lies told by Xoliswa Ndwandwe in the June Taxi Talk column. Ms Ndwandwe has obviously never attended any of the DP meetings.

Domestic workers who have joined the DP have done so of their own free will. Far from supporting the efforts of the DP, many madams have reacted in a hostile manner. We have received death threats for us to end educating workers about their basic rights.

At our meetings we stress the secrecy of the vote. Ms Ndwandwe must know that from the days of Helen Suzman, the Democratic

Party has actively campaigned for the rights of those who were unjustly deprived of the vote.

Yours sincerely

*Jack Bloom
Democratic Party*

Let us wake up

I would like to inform women that fathers molesting their children sexually is increasing. This bad deed affects our children mentally and physically, and we must do something about it. Women, let's wake up and address this issue in our meetings. I think strong measures must be taken against such irresponsible fathers. Slogans must be drawn up. Make children aware that this can happen to them and that they must speak about it. I

know this is a sensitive issue but women, let us wake up!

Ms DW Peele

AS A MATTER OF FACT
SPEAK wishes to apologise to Gill Noero for quoting her as a DP member in the July issue. We wish to make it clear that she was commenting in her capacity as a feminist.

We would also like to apologise for a printing error on the notice board – July issue. The notice board should have read "National Childhood Safety Prevention week". We wish to apologise to the organisers.

WINNERS! Matla Trust Voter Education Competition

Solly Tjabadi is the lucky winner of a radio

Congratulations to the three SPEAK readers who won calculators.

The winners are:

- 1. Klaas Xaba
Edenvale**
- 2. Joyce Masha
Sekhukhune**
- 3. Mapula Ramosibudi
Soekmekaar**

Kwa-Sophie

"Gender is about male and female and how these categories divide up the human race into those that can and those that can't...walk around at night, make decisions about nuclear war, decide whether to have a baby or not."



"Because you have a womb you must make tea and coffee."

When somebody says the word "gender", what does it make you think of?

"It's about how our society is divided up into who serves who."

"I feel invisible. When I asked a question it wasn't answered, when a man asked the same question it was answered."

"Gender language is everywhere, even the image of God is as a man."

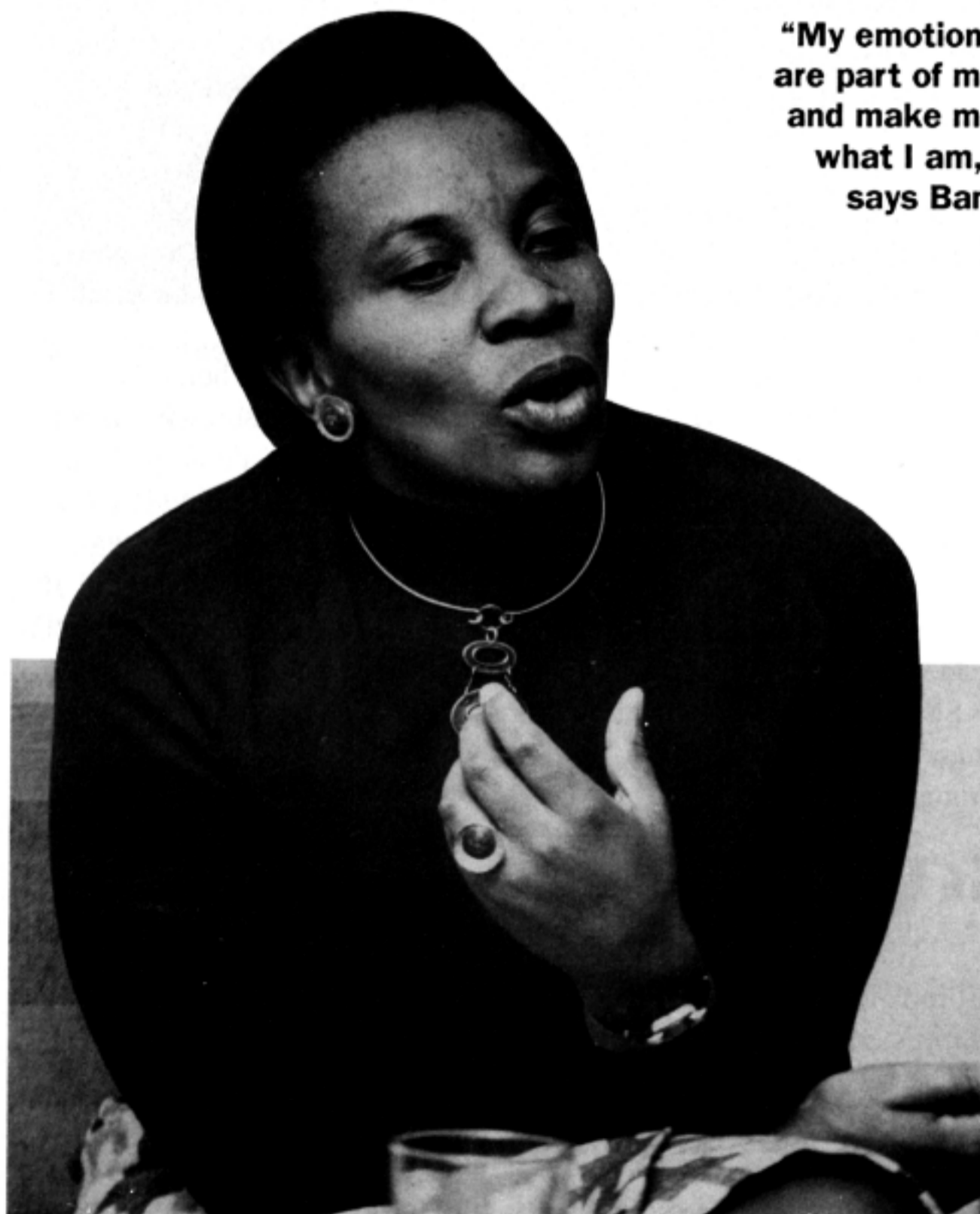
QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"From birth a child gets taught to take on a certain role in life. A boy is praised for his strong legs that will later score goals on the soccer field. A girl is praised for her looks and charm that will one day help her to find a husband. The baby of course does not know the difference between a husband and a soccer ball - but he or she will certainly come to learn the difference." From the book, NO TURNING BACK

Brigalia Bam

Courage, confidence and caring

**"My emotions
are part of me
and make me
what I am,"
says Bam**



To commemorate August 9 this year, we celebrate the life of one of the many powerful women in South Africa, Brigalia Bam. Rosalee Telela spoke to her

Brigalia Hlope Bam was born in the Transkei. She was brought up in a large family. "At my home there were cousins, aunts and many other people," said Bam. She speaks warmly of the influence her grandfather, mother and all the women in her life had on her as a child.

"They taught me about values and gave me an understanding of life that has stayed with me all these years," says Bam.

She comes from a very strong church background and at the age of seven, Bam was sent to an Anglican boarding school. The school was run by teachers and boarding mistresses who believed in and taught discipline in a way that was "impressive".

"At that stage in my life, women had a great influence on my life. I was very impressed by the dedication of the nuns who raised me, but I used to wonder if they did not miss having children of their own," she says.

Bam says she questioned women's role in society from an early age. "As a child I asked why there were only altar boys and not altar girls in the church. This made me

very angry because I could not understand why.

"The nuns were the ones who would clean the church, put flowers on the altar and do many other chores, but it was the work of the priest that always seemed more important," she says.

"I did not think of women's liberation then, I just thought nuns could be doing more interesting things," adds Bam.

The position of women in the village where she came from both inspired and saddened her. "Women ploughed the fields, carried wood and water and did many other chores. I never saw a man carrying wood or water on his head. They would just sit around and enjoy the sun for long hours. I remember thinking the only thing men were good at was being lazy," laughs Bam.

She believes society, families and in particular women, should question their own situations.

"As long as women accept these roles, whether in traditional or modern society, the situation will not change."

Bam says it is a "big mistake" to talk about women's issues as if they are not part of the general problems in society. "The new way of looking at this problem is good. We talk about gender equality. The continuing practices against women have to be seen as a human rights issue which cuts across every culture," she argues.

Bam is the deputy secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). She is one of many women in top posi-



Photo: Compliments SACC

Bam making a point at a conference

tions in the SACC.

"It just happened that way. The majority of SACC employees are women. For a very long time many departments and programmes of the SACC have been headed by women. One of the most important programmes called the "Dependence Conference" - working mainly with political prisoners and detainees, was headed by women," says Bam.

She adds those who head the finance department are also women.

"When I talk about finance, I'm talking about millions which the women administer."

The SACC is one of few national organisations who have two vice-presidents as women. "This does not mean

things are perfect. It just happened that way and people accept and are used to the leadership of women," she adds.

As a woman and a leader, Bam faces many challenges.

"I keep asking myself how I should use my position as a woman who is involved in many male structures and who is holding positions which are traditionally male?" she says.

"I do not want to be seen in these structures as someone who just complains, as I have done all my life, about the absence of women in powerful positions.

"At the same time I don't want others to feel I'm not raising these issues all the time because I am being influenced by the men who are in power. "I have a very strong and, almost desperate, feeling of wanting other women to have courage, confidence and to be prepared to become 'unpopular' for being strong on gender issues," she says.

Bam hates it when others see her as a woman who uses a male style of leadership. "I'm struggling with feelings that as a woman I should do things differently. At the same time, if I do not do things the way men do, then, for them I am lowering standards. It is a constant battle in my life where I struggle not to lose my own way of doing things," she adds.

One of her own ways of doing things, is not to apologise for her emotions and the way she feels about things. "My emotions are part of me and they make me what I am. I do not like it when people use it as something negative, saying things like, 'a woman will

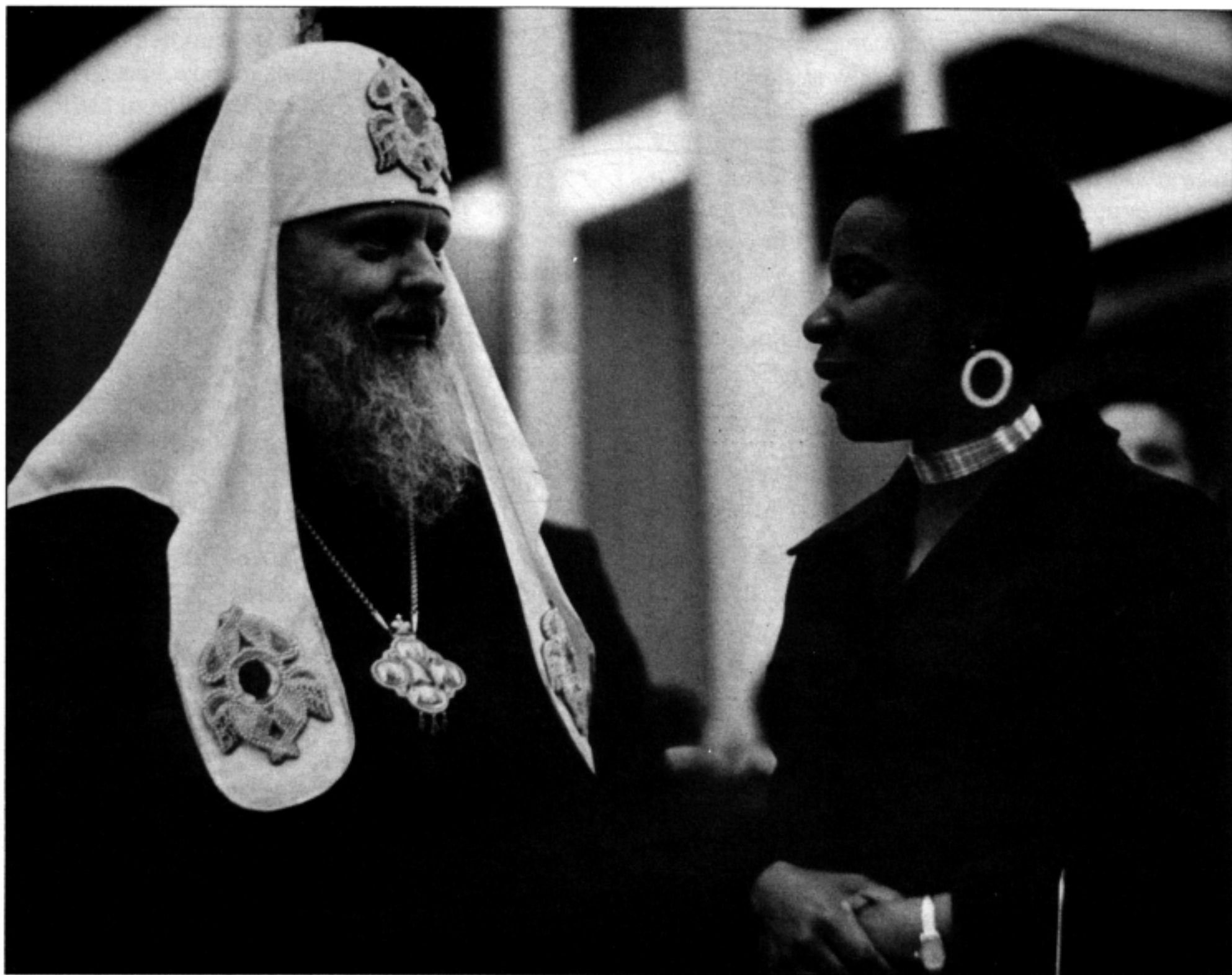


Photo: John Taylor

Bam speaks to a church leader on a visit to Switzerland

be emotional about things like this'."

She says it feels strange being a member of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Board.

"The previous SABC Board was mostly white males with a few females around. It has to change from its past because TV and radio are very important and powerful tools. In this country we have little understanding and appreciation of each others cultures. We can use it to challenge the views men have about women," adds Bam.

SPEAK asked her what National Women's Day, August 9, means to her.

"It is a day to challenge the way of life of the majority of women, not only in my country, but in the rest of the world. It is important that we have a day that brings out our own awareness and a day to celebrate. National Women's Day is a building process working towards the day of our liberation. It is an occasion which shows, that as women, we can mobilise ourselves. We are here, we are powerful, we are enthusiastic, we want change and we can work for it. ★



Photo: J Gogo Khoza

"As women, we are powerful. We want change and can work for it."



Make your vote count

In 1930 white South African women won the vote. Like other women all over the world, they still feel they don't have a real say in politics. *SPEAK* looks at how women won the vote in South Africa

In May 1930 women in South Africa won the vote. But like with the rest of South Africa, it was white women alone who won the vote. Only white South Africans could vote for the government and its laws. "Democracy" was, and still is, something only whites have in this country.

Although white women demanded the vote for themselves and not for other women living in this country, it is still a struggle worth mentioning. The campaign, by white women for the vote, was led by a woman called Bertha Solomon. Solomon, was one of many women who strongly voiced their disapproval of women being left out of politics.

In 1928 the then Prime Minister of South Africa General Hertzog promised to make the Bill

part of the law. Women kept him to that promise. They demanded the Bill be implemented. Solomon, who practised as a lawyer was even more determined to get the vote. As a lawyer, she often had cases of women who were unfairly treated in their marriages. It angered and upset her because the women she represented often could not be helped because of the unfair law practices against women. Solomon was convinced the only way to improve things was for women to get the vote and to change their position from within. The Senate, which was the highest decision-making body of the government had to decide on the issue.

Many of the arguments put forward by the men who decided on the issue were not in favour of

giving women the vote.

Some said women should not become involved in politics because : "it is not right and proper in the Christian sense". Others said: "the fight for women to get the vote was part of a world-wide movement against authority and discipline."

The most senseless argument put to the Senate was: "women's brains could not develop to the same level as men."

These arguments were the dominant ones and it seemed almost certain the Senate would decide against women getting the vote. It certainly came as a surprise when the majority voted in favour of women getting the vote.

The Bill was nicknamed "Bertha's Bill" because of her dedication to the struggle for women's rights. She was elected as the United Party Member of Parliament for Jeppe in 1933, a seat she held for 20 years. Solomon used her position to fight against the many legal problems women experienced.

In 1953 she put the Matrimonial Affairs Act through parliament. This Bill removed some of the legal difficulties married women had regarding financial affairs, divorce and guardianship of children. Because white women had the vote, they were able to challenge and change some of the laws.

South Africa still remain the only country in the world where the majority of people do not have the vote because of its policy of apartheid.

While the majority of women in the world have the vote, the laws still do not favour women.

In elections held in Kenya last year, the League of Kenyan Women Voters mobilised women in different parties to put pressure on their parties to put women's rights on the agenda. The League threatened it would call on women not vote for parties who did not regard women's

rights as important. Many parties in Kenya were forced to place women's rights on their agendas.

In Eritrea, women made sure their demands were guaranteed before voting for their government in April this year. They were part of drawing up all government policies and were active in all government structures. The National Union of Eritrean Women demanded that they be part of the elections and said they would only vote for a government if it treats all citizens – men and women – the same. This was how Eritrean women won their rights and recognition in society.

All women in South Africa will soon have the vote. This vote will mean nothing if women don't use it their interest. ★

COMPETITION WIN A RADIO!

Answer the question below and you could be the lucky winner of a radio

In which year did white South African women get the vote?

Place a cross in the box next to the right answer:

- A. 1912
- B. 1908
- C. 1930

Name

Address

.....

.....

Code

I agree to abide by the rules of this competition

Signature

Send your entry form to SPEAK/Matla Trust
Voter Education Competition,
PO Box 261 363, Excom 2023, South Africa

Competition rules: The decision of the judges is final. This competition is only open to people living in South Africa. Employees and relatives of employees of SPEAK are not allowed to enter. The closing date is 26 August 1993. The winner will be announced in the September issue of SPEAK.



Matla Trust

**This page is a joint project
of**

MATLA TRUST & SPEAK

When there is more than one wife...

Is the tradition of polygamy (marriages where the husband has more than one wife) fair on women?
Thoraya Pandy looks at the issue

Nambita Vimbela found out five years after she married Mbulelo that he had another wife.

"Mbulelo came from the Ciskei to work in Johannesburg. When he asked me to marry him I asked him if he had another wife. Mbulelo said no, so I agreed to marry him," remembers Vimbela.

She says he would go to the Ciskei alone during holidays.

"He always had an excuse for not taking me along. In 1965 Mbulelo took me with him to the Ciskei. On our way to his home he told me he had another wife. I could not believe it. I felt very bad and betrayed," says Vimbela.

This was not all. One morning, while still in the Ciskei, Vimbela woke up and found that Mbulelo had gone back to Johannesburg with his other wife.

"I refused to stay in the Ciskei and found my way back to the city.

"Although I went back to him, I did not trust him. He sent his wife back to the Ciskei because I refused to live in the same house as her.

"I got a job so that I could survive without him," she says.

In 1975, Vimbela returned from work one day and found her husband had taken their children and all her belongings. Mbulelo

had taken the children to the Ciskei.

"After three years of fighting to get them back, my children came to live with me again. I no longer saw him as my husband," says Vimbela.

"It's a shame that we (women) are not treated equally. In the early days polygamy was okay because the wives were treated equally and with respect. Today, this is not the case. They cannot be happy because they think of their situation all the time. Men like that are selfish," she adds.

Ruwayda Davids happily agreed to becoming Mohamed's

Photo by Gill De Vlieg





Polygamous marriages often lead to large families living in small houses

second wife. According to the Quran, Muslim men can marry up to four wives.

“The only things I wanted from him were love, respect and equality. I knew I’d be sharing him with someone else,” says Davids.

For two years Davids was happy in her marriage.

“I got jealous when he went to his other wife (we did not live in the same house) but I learnt to accept it. Besides, he would always tell me if he was not coming home.”

“When he stopped telling me he was not coming home, I just assumed he was with his other

wife. Later I found out he was seeing another woman. When I asked him about it, he said I have no right to question him and that he can and will do whatever he wants. I became very depressed and would burst into tears all the time.

“I’m not thinking of getting divorced. After eight years of marriage, where can I go? What must I do?” she asks hopelessly.

Beauty Mkhize, chairperson of the Rural Women’s Movement, says her organisation wants polygamy abolished in a new South Africa.

“In the majority of cases, women in polygamous marriages

are not supported by their husbands. Rural women and their children suffer more because their



Beauty Mkhize of the Rural Women’s Movement

Photo by Elmond Jiyane, Dynamic Images

husbands come to the city and forget they have another family.

"Women are forced to do work that is too hard for them."

Mkhize says many women work in the forests chopping down trees.

"Some have been killed by trees falling on them. These women do not receive any compensation if they get killed or injured and when they die, their children are left stranded."

She says men have changed the custom of polygamy.

"In the beginning food was plentiful. Men would marry again to provide a home and security for women. Men had to consult with the first wife and their families if they wanted to marry again. It was their duty to treat all their wives and children equally. If this did not happen the wives and families would speak to him about it. Today, this seldom happens. Often men will simply not tell their wives if they are having affairs. This is why we want polygamy abolished," says Mkhize.

Roshieda Shabodien of the Call of Islam agrees.

"The Quran limits a man to four wives under very strict



Roshieda Shabodien of the Call of Islam

conditions. A man must treat all of his wives equally."

At the same time the Quran argues that a man should rather have one wife because treating each woman equally would be difficult, says Shabodien

"The Quran also pins down polygamy to a particular time. It was to help women and children who lost their husbands and fathers in battles which Muslim men were fighting. Despite this clear position people continue to interpret it wrongly.

"This has resulted in many hardships for most women in polygamous marriages," she adds.

"Polygamy has often simply meant deserting one family for another without any maintenance for the first family. This gets worse when religious leaders permit polygamy, but do nothing to make sure that justice takes place for the abandoned wife and children involved," says Shabodien.

She says the Islamic principle of the man having to ask his first wife if he can marry again is often forgotten.

"The struggle for justice, equality and consultation between men and women must be at the core of Islam again. This is going to be a long struggle and as women, we must use avenues open to us.

"We must not regard marriage as something romantic but also as a civil contract. Women can state in their marriage contract that the husband shall not take a second wife at all or without her consent.

"Women today are not without power. They work, they contribute a lot to the household and can join women's

organisations which are fighting against women's oppression."

She called on Muslim women to join the struggle to re-look at Islam according to what God wanted it to be. ○

What do organisations say about polygamy?

Inkatha supports polygamy saying it respects cultural traditions and the right to marry in any form that is acceptable, in terms of customary laws.

The **PAC** does not have a position saying polygamy has not been addressed in the organisation because it is a sensitive issue.

There is a position that members can express their own views on the matter.

The **ANC** does not have a clear position. The ANC does not support traditional practices which are sexist, racist and oppressive towards women. Laws must protect women and children in polygamous marriages.

AZAPO does not have a position saying the question of polygamy still needs to be looked at by all sectors of Azapo. There is a position that members must respect their partners and that women should not be treated as juniors.



August 9

A DAY FOR CELEBRATING

On August 9 thousands of women all over South Africa will be celebrating National Women's Day

In 1956 on the morning of August 9, 20 000 women gathered in Pretoria at the office of the Prime Minister, JG Strydom. They were protesting against the pass laws being extended to women.

Women from all over South Africa arrived in Pretoria with babies on their backs, with food baskets and most importantly, each woman carried a letter of protest addressed to Strydom. When the women arrived to hand over the letters of protest, Strydom was not there.

"The Prime Minister has run away he is scared of us women!" said the late Lilian Ngoyi, one of the leaders of the march. The crowd stood in total silence with their fists raised in the air for 30 full minutes. The silence was broken by "Nkosi Sikelel'i Afrika". The 7 year campaign that women waged against carrying passes was defeated by the state in 1959 when all Africans were forced to carry the "dompas".

August 9 will go down in our history books as the day South African women shook the country.

Covenant with women of the world

I came this way
moved by the spirit
Here I found a place
to rest my weary heart,
to relieve my shoulders
of the yoke of oppression,
Maybe to pass it on to you, I do not know

I got inspiration
I had time off
from seeing blood in my country
from hearing cries of women and children
from risking every minute of my life
in the apartheid South Africa

I responded
when you said: "Let us be in covenant
as our God is with us".
Now I know our struggle is also your struggle
Across the miles you feel
the piercing pain that stabs our hearts merci-
lessly.

For once, I knew the Lord had spoken
Here in your country I see rivers flowing
the land so green with nature's beauty.
My tears wanted to flow
but, I would not allow it.

Women of the world
Let us weave a blanket of peace
Let us sew together a quilt with all colours in
harmony
Let us create melodies as we sing in one
voice
Let us untie the knots of aprons of injustice
Let us together roll the stone away
to make way for a new life

Together we are strong
Together we can change the world

By Boitumelo Mafokeng who dedicates this poem to all the women in the world



DO YOU WANT TO BUY A HOUSE?



Things to watch out for

Make sure you know everything you need to know about buying or building your own home. In the first of a series of articles on Buying a House, SPEAK looks at what it costs to buy a house and housing bonds

The first question to ask yourself is whether you can afford to buy a house. Buying a house is very expensive. If you can afford it, here are some things that you will need to know:

- If you get a loan (mortgage bond) from a building society or bank, monthly repayments have to be made. The payments include repayment of the loan plus interest;
- You also have to pay an extra amount of money for bond registration and administration costs, stamp duty, inspection fees and insurance;
- Once you move into your house you have to pay rates and taxes, electricity, water and rubbish removal;
- If you buy a house which has already been built, you have to get a lawyer to draw up a transfer agreement. You will have to pay the lawyer for doing this and for the transfer fees.

How Bonds Work

Most financial institutions are prepared to lend you 90% of the cost of the house. You then agree to repay the bond every month. This is similar to a credit agreement and works as follows:

- If, for example, you obtain a bond for R25 000 to be repaid over a period of 20 years, at the present interest rate of 20%, your monthly repayments will be R416,66. Your repayments should not be more than a quarter of your wages, so in this case you must earn not less than R1 666,66 (after deductions) per month;
- After twenty years you would have paid an amount of R99 999,99 to the financial institution. The extra R74 999,99 is the interest that you have paid to the financial institution;
- If you have to borrow the remaining 10%, remember that this money has also been lent to you and has to be repaid;

Buying a house is a big step

There are many things to consider, such as:

- Financial institutions take both the husband and wife's income into account. Think about how the family will cope if the husband or wife becomes unemployed or dies;
- If you do not keep up your payments the financial institution that lent you the money will repossess your home. In order to do this they will issue a summons against you;
- Interest rates do not stay the same. If they increase, the monthly repayments will become higher;

“Always be honest with yourself and the financial institution about what you can afford.”

- Always be honest with yourself and the financial institution about what you can afford. Rather start off with a small house, additions can be made when extra money is available;
- If you are having financial problems and cannot afford to pay the monthly re-payments, speak to the financial institution. It is better to sell the house than to have it repossessed. It will be sold

at public auction if repossessed. You will get more money for your house through a private sale. Make sure the price you ask for covers the cost of the bond, or you will have to pay the outstanding balance.

What is a Subsidy?

A subsidy is a certain amount of money paid by the government or an employer with the aim of reducing the burden of the cost to the homeowner. Subsidies differ from company to company. More about subsidies:

- The government has a First-time Home Ownership Subsidy which can be applied for by any South African who is in permanent employment and if the house, together with the land, does not cost more than R65 000. The government pays one third of the interest of your instalment for the first seven years. You only qualify for this subsidy if you do not receive a housing allowance or subsidy anywhere else;
- If you are employed by the government, you may qualify for a government subsidy.

Beware of Credit Brokers and Financial Consultants.

For the best advice as to whether you qualify for a loan and for assistance in applying for a loan, consult one of the financial institutions, eg Banks or Building Societies.

In the next issue of SPEAK we will deal with Building Contractors.

Information from the Housing Brochure of The Housing Rights Unit of Lawyers for Human Rights P O Box 5156 Johannesburg 2000 ●



A Sangoma laughs out loud at holding an artificial (not real) penis. The penises were used to show Sangomas how to put on a condom. Sangomas have been asked to speak to their clients about AIDS and how to use condoms. Another Sangoma, looking on, shares the moment



Rolling on a condom. Here a Sangoma wipes an artificial penis with a cloth - to make sure it is clean. Other Sangomas, amused by the sight, look on

SANGOMAS FIGHT AIDS

Sangomas have been included into the fight against AIDS. AIDSCOM, a non-governmental AIDS education organisation, recently held a workshop with 95 Sangomas in the township of Nkowankowa near Tzaneen. *Ellen Elmendorp* was there to photograph the event



Getting serious! A Sangoma ready to roll the condom onto the artificial penis



Aai! The condom is on! What a sight. Sangomas listen as a speaker explains the importance of using condoms and how Sangomas can get the message of AIDS across to their clients ◉



Graphic by Maya Wedemig

It could be your child

The statistics for child abuse are frightening, but not as frightening as it is for the thousands of children who are being abused.
By Rosalee Telela

While there are many different forms of child abuse, sexual abuse is the most commonly reported.

Lindiwe is one of thousands of children in South Africa who are sexually abused by their fathers or adults. Lindiwe's mother refused to believe her when she first told her mother what was happening.

"When Lindiwe told me, I did not want to believe her. I hit her and told her not to tell lies. It was very hard for me to believe that my husband, the father of my children, could do

something like this," says Sibongile, Lindiwe's mother.

"Lindiwe is 15-years-old now, and her father no longer abuses her. Lindiwe's uncle told my husband he would kill him if he ever touches her again.

"We never talk about what happened and I try not to think about it.

"But my daughter is still afraid of her father. She refuses to be left alone with him," adds Sibongile sadly.

Lindiwe is free from the abuse but will she ever be free of the memories of what her father did to her?

SPEAK talked to Jackie Loffell of the Johannesburg Child Welfare Society about child abuse

SPEAK: There are different views on child abuse. What are your views on it?

Loffell: Child abuse is any action that affects the physical, mental or emotional well-being of a child. It becomes child abuse when action should be taken to protect a child, and it is not. There are many different ways in which children are abused.

Physical abuse is something not everyone agrees on. Some people see corporal punishment as abuse, other people do not.

Another form of abuse is when children do not get enough or proper food. In some cases parents cannot give their children the nourishment they need because of poverty. This one can understand. But in other cases, children do not eat properly because they are neglected by their parents.

Emotional abuse is when parents or adults fail to see to the emotional needs of their children. Parents or adults may continually frighten the child, threaten to leave the child, or neglect to give the child enough love and attention.

Sexual abuse is the most common form of child abuse. It is important to remember that those who abuse children are not always monsters or someone you don't know. It could be, and often is, someone in your family or somebody close to you."

SPEAK: How can child abuse

be prevented?

Loffell: Children have to know they can trust you and speak to you about anything. You have to encourage children to say "NO". They have to be taught that they have a right over their bodies and that no-one has the right to abuse them.

It is important that abuse comes out into the open. Because there has been a lot of publicity around sexual abuse people are coming forward and saying they were sexually abused. Through this the silence has been broken. Many, however, are still too scared to speak about it.

SPEAK: What are the effects of child abuse?

Loffell: The majority of sexual abusers are men, and the majority of victims are girls. A lot of women who were abused as children suffer life-long depression until they go for help.

Many institutions that treat people with alcohol abuse have found that a very high percentage of their clients have a history of sexual abuse. A lot of women who were abused as children often find themselves with partners who abuse them emotionally and physically. Many of these women do not challenge the abuse because it has been part of their everyday lives for such a long time.

SPEAK: How does a person go about reporting child abuse?

Loffell: Speak to a member of the family you trust if you suspect that a child is being abused. If this is difficult you

could phone the Johannesburg Child Welfare Society or Childline.

Also, a parent who is abusing their child and wants help, could phone the same organisations.

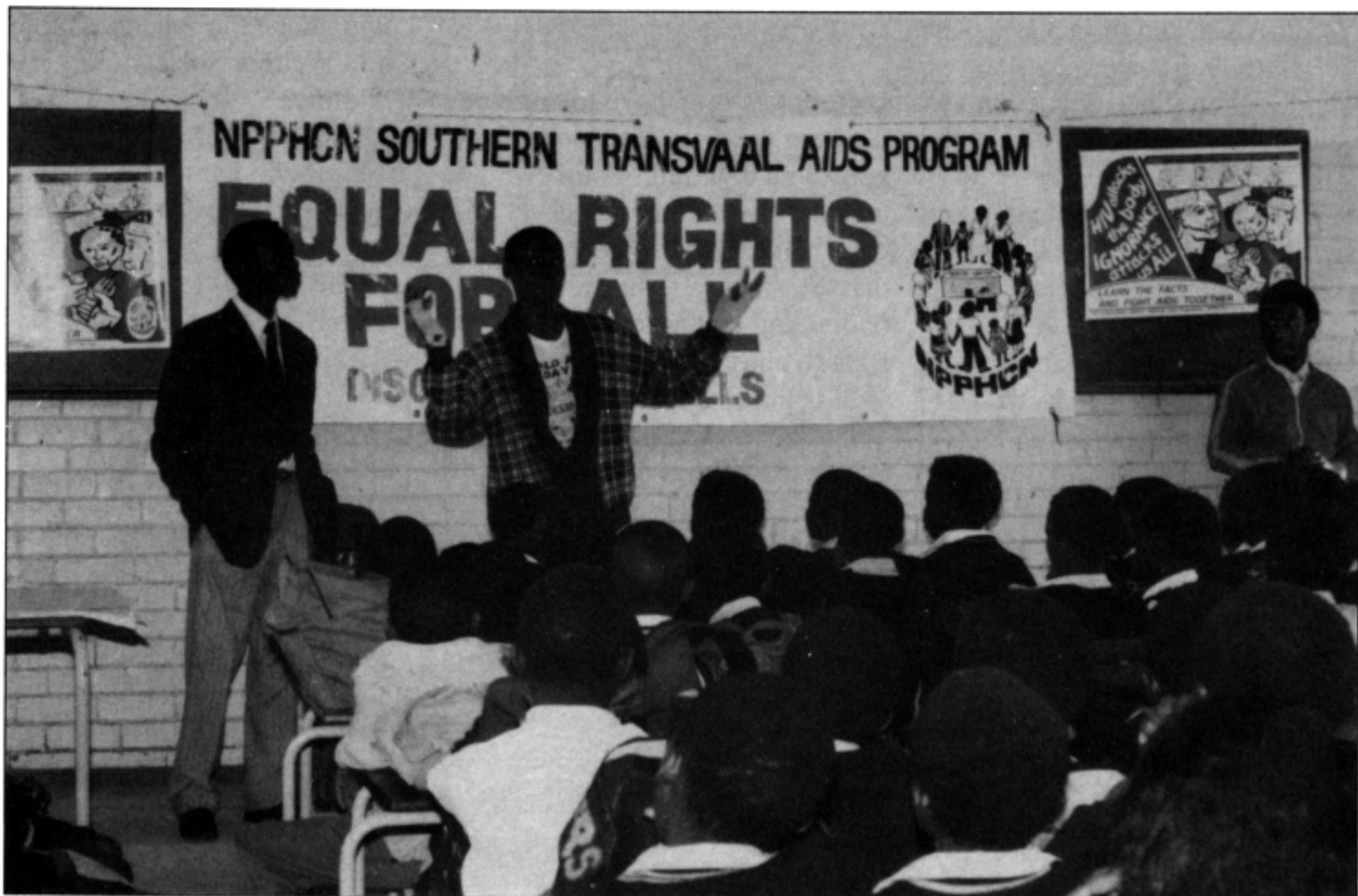
When we take up a case of child abuse, a social worker will meet the family and the child, depending on what kind of abuse it is. We deal with the problem by trying to help rather than punish people. We speak to the parents and tell them we want to help the family work through their problem. Opening up is a very difficult thing but it is the only way this problem can be addressed. The process is a long one and it will depend on people's attitudes and the importance our society places on women, children and family life.



Photo by Rosalene Telela, SPEAK magazine

**Jackie Loffell –
Johannesburg Child Welfare
Society**

If you are abusing a child, or know of a child who is being abused contact: Johannesburg Child Welfare Society or Childline on 0800 123 321. This is a toll-free telephone number. ★



Photos: NPPHCN

Community AIDS worker Mandla Hlatshwayo taking AIDS education to schools

AIDS – Getting the community involved

750 000 South Africans will be infected with AIDS by 1994 unless something is done to reduce the fast spread of this disease

It is important and necessary to develop a national, community-based AIDS programme says the National Progressive Primary Health Care Network (NPPHCN). For the past few years NPPHCN has been working on such a programme.

NPPHCN says the AIDS epidemic in South Africa is at an early stage, but HIV - the virus that causes AIDS, is spreading fast. "The problem is that many people still do not believe AIDS exists and therefore it is difficult to get their full cooperation. They think that AIDS is a lie, an American, homosexual or foreign disease. At this early stage of the epidemic, black communities have almost no experience

of AIDS, which is why it is essential that communities are involved in AIDS education programmes," says Themba Miya, an AIDS worker for NPPHCN.

The network's aim is to combine AIDS education with existing education and development programmes in communities. One of the things they are doing is implementing a programme which promotes the acceptance of people who are HIV-positive in the community. Programmes and workshops are run in a way that involve people and help people deal with the issue, rather than to scare them away.

AIDS organisers work closely with community organisations in areas all over South Africa.

"My main duty is to educate and inform people about HIV and AIDS, and to teach them to accept and care for those who are HIV-positive," says Miya. "It is very inspiring when the work we do show results. We have formed AIDS awareness committees in organisations and in the community. For example, the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) will be launching a national campaign and is demanding that sex education be taught in all schools," he adds.

"We have also worked with the ANC Youth League, traditional healers and other organisations in finding creative and effective ways of campaigning around AIDS."

NPPHCN believe that AIDS programmes must identify and address the social and political factors connected to the spread of the disease.

"Poverty, migrant labour, unemployment, poor education and poor housing play a big role in the spread of the disease. In addition to this, the health care system in this country is divided along the lines of race, class, sex and sexuality. "Little importance is placed on prevention and health promotion and there is a total lack of encouragement of communities to become involved in health programmes of the government," says Miya.

"The government did not consult with or involve communities when it started its AIDS campaign. Also, too little funds have been set aside by the government for HIV prevention and the care of people who are HIV-positive.

While NPPHCN and other progressive organisations are demanding that the government take responsibility for the AIDS epidemic in South Africa, they continue to run

educational workshops, and to give support to people who are HIV positive or have AIDS.

NPPHCN has eleven regional structures and most of the work is done through these structures. In consultation with organisations, each region employs several community AIDS workers who carry out the work of NPPHCN in the region.

While there are a number of people and projects active in AIDS education in South Africa their efforts are not nationally co-ordinated.

The network believe that only through ongoing campaigns in communities will the seriousness and dangers of the AIDS epidemic be recognised. ★

If you want more information or wish to get in touch with NPPHCN AIDS Programme, here are the telephone numbers of their offices:

National office: (011) 337 8539
Eastern Transvaal: (01315) 41 181
Northern Transvaal: (01521) 91 4221
Southern Transvaal: (011) 337 7126
Orange Free State: (057) 396 5509
Natal: (031) 301 2582
Natal Midlands: (0331) 45 0453
Northern Natal: (0354) 74 181
Border: (0431) 43 6733
Eastern Cape: (041) 41 1618
Transkel: (0471) 31 0757
Western Cape: (021) 696 4154



Community AIDS workers speaking to people in the community

These pages have been made possible by NPPHCN National AIDS Programme



PREACHER WITH A MISSION

When it comes to equality between women and men, David Serekwane, national organiser of the Congress of South African Students (Cosas), is a 'Moruti' (preacher) with a mission. By Rosalee Telela

“Comrades must stop talking about non-sexism in their offices. They should go out and preach equality.”

As a national organiser of Cosas, David Serekwane spends most of his time visiting Cosas branches all across the country. “Sometimes I find myself away from home for a month or two,” he says.

Serekwane says he believes firmly in the emancipation of women: “that principle is central in my life. I practice what I preach.” He argues the organisation’s principle and practice of non-sexism has so far been more successful in different regions where “women are members of their executives, but are not represented on the national level.” All the members of Cosas’ national executive are male. He believes this gap has to

be closed and supports the organisation’s effort in this regard: “10 out of 30 delegates from each region who will be attending the Cosas national congress will be female comrades. This shows that we are addressing the issue of inequality.”



Photo by Rosalee Telela, SPEAK

David Serekwane, National organiser of COSAS

Serekwane says he only became a “champion of women’s rights when I got involved in politics. Before that I was not

even aware that men oppress women.” He believes: “it is our culture that makes women feel inferior and men superior.” Serekwane’s awareness led him to accept being elected as the women’s organiser for his SRC in high school. “Other students laughed at me but I did not mind. They were not informed about sexism and it was my task to educate them,” he says.

As a male who was trying to get female students involved, he experienced many problems: “It was not easy getting female students to be active members who could make a difference. When they were alone they would talk, but when in the company of male comrades, they would keep quiet and not participate.”

SPEAK asked him how he organised female students. “we held discussions and workshops on sexism. These were successful because some of the female

comrades became confident enough to participate in meetings and present speeches.”

Serekwane is convinced the only way women can get involved in organisations is if “they are given a chance to do so. We need to make sure that we train female comrades. It is the responsibility of people who are leading the organisation, whether male or female. As a youth organisation, Cosas is the right place to begin such training.”

He says sexual harassment of women by male comrades also makes it difficult for women to get involved: “when they meet a female comrade they immediately want to propose love to her. At the end of the day she decides she does not want to be politically involved any more. Disciplinary measures should be taken in such instances.” He added these instances include sexual

harassment and rape that happen a lot in schools in the township. But disciplinary action is not enough: “these problems need to be solved in a way in which people will understand why we are fighting against this kind of behaviour. That is why our education campaigns around sexism, sexual harassment and rape are so important,” adds Serekwane.

Yet most of the time these campaigns are last on the list of many organisation's agenda.” The process of educating students on the issue of sexism “has been successful in that female students are presidents of SRC's and students are getting used to the leadership of women,” he says.

For Serekwane sex and AIDS education should be part of every student's learning experience in

school. “AIDS is there, we can't ignore it,” he says. He is glad his organisation has taken a position on this issue: “Cosas leadership recently held a workshop on AIDS. We felt we needed to know what it was all about. As part of the youth, students have to be part and parcel of AIDS awareness campaigns. We plan to hold workshops in schools together with progressive health organisations.

“The road to equality is long and hard, but if we as the youth educate ourselves and our parents about equality, things will change. It is important that women in South Africa stand up for their rights. Those men who still believe in the culture of ‘I'm a man and I'm the boss’ must realise that things are changing and they also need to change.” ●



Cosas “Moruti” David Serekwane says “youth-gatherings should be used to educate young people about equality”

Socialism does work

Is socialism dead? "No" say two Cuban women who visited South Africa recently. They spoke to *Rosalee Telela* about life in Cuba

"Life is tough in Cuba – but the peoples commitment to socialism has not died." That's the message from Magarita Vidal and Olena Navas who recently visited South Africa.

Why is life tough? "Many countries like the United States of America (USA) have banned companies and people from trading with Cuba," explained Vidal, senior manager in the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Trade.

"But," say the two, "the people in Cuba are clear it is not socialism which makes life tough – it is the outside pressure.

"It is very difficult to get important items like food for babies, milk, meat and cereals," said Vidal.

SPEAK asked them what they are doing about the problem.

"We are trying to find solutions and we are producing products for ourselves and to sell in different markets," said Vidal.

80 percent of Cuba's trade was with the former socialist countries which have disappeared. People in Cuba now make things like shampoos, conditioners, tampons and other things they can no longer buy.

The majority of people in Cuba want to save the revolution because they feel they have achieved a lot through it. Earlier this year, 93 percent of the people re-elected Fidel Castro as President.

"Women in particular have won many victories over the years," said Vidal.

Before the revolution, machismo (male behaviour and attitudes that are aggressive and offensive to women) was very strong.

Most men would not let their wives work.

"After the revolution we began a very long process of educating people about women's rights. This was important because people, like my parents, held on to the old ideas about the role of women in society," Vidal said.



MAGARITA VIDAL:
"Women can take their husbands to court if they refuse to share in the housework."

To make sure women were active and equal members of society in the new revolutionary Cuba "we said that all the women should study. Education was and is one of our priorities" she added.

Cuba's constitution does not accept discrimination on the basis of race, sex or religion.

For Vidal, the problem of who was responsible for the home still remained.

"I started working for the ministry when I was 17 years-old. When my son was born I was working and studying at the same time. I remember that after school I would have to come home to do the washing, cooking and cleaning," said Vidal.

"It's difficult for women to



OLENA NAVAS:
**“Only through
 fighting can we
 obtain a
 better future.”**

Photos: Rosalee Telela

combine all the responsibilities. You are a mother, a worker, a wife, a daughter, a sister – you are a lot of things at the same time,” adds Vidal.

In 1975 Cuba passed a law, The Family Code, on International Women’s Day which says men should share in housework and child-care and that women have the responsibility and duty to take part in political activity and jobs outside the home.

“This has made the life of women in Cuba a little easier. Women can take their husbands to court if men refuse to share

in the housework,” said Vidal.

Violence against women happens, but it is against the law for a man to beat his wife or ill-treat her in any way.

Sexism still exists. There are more women than men in jobs like administration, which is seen as women’s jobs.

Nevertheless, the develop-

ment of women in Cuba has increased through the years.

“Representation of women in the Cuban government is high compared to other developing countries. In the national assembly, which is the main organ of power in the state, there are between 25 to 30 women. You even find women between the ages of 21 and 22 in the assembly,” said Vidal.

Olena Navas, who works with Vidal as assistant managing director said “only through fighting can we obtain a better future for ourselves and our children. At the moment in Cuba, the law says there should be equality between men and women but women still have to fight.”

Both women say the harshness of life without comforts has made the people in Cuba more determined to fight for their revolution. ★

About Cuba

Cuba is an island in the Caribbean between Latin America and the United States of America.

Capital City: Havana

Official language: Spanish

Population: 10.8 million

Some important dates:

1959 – The Cuban people won the revolution

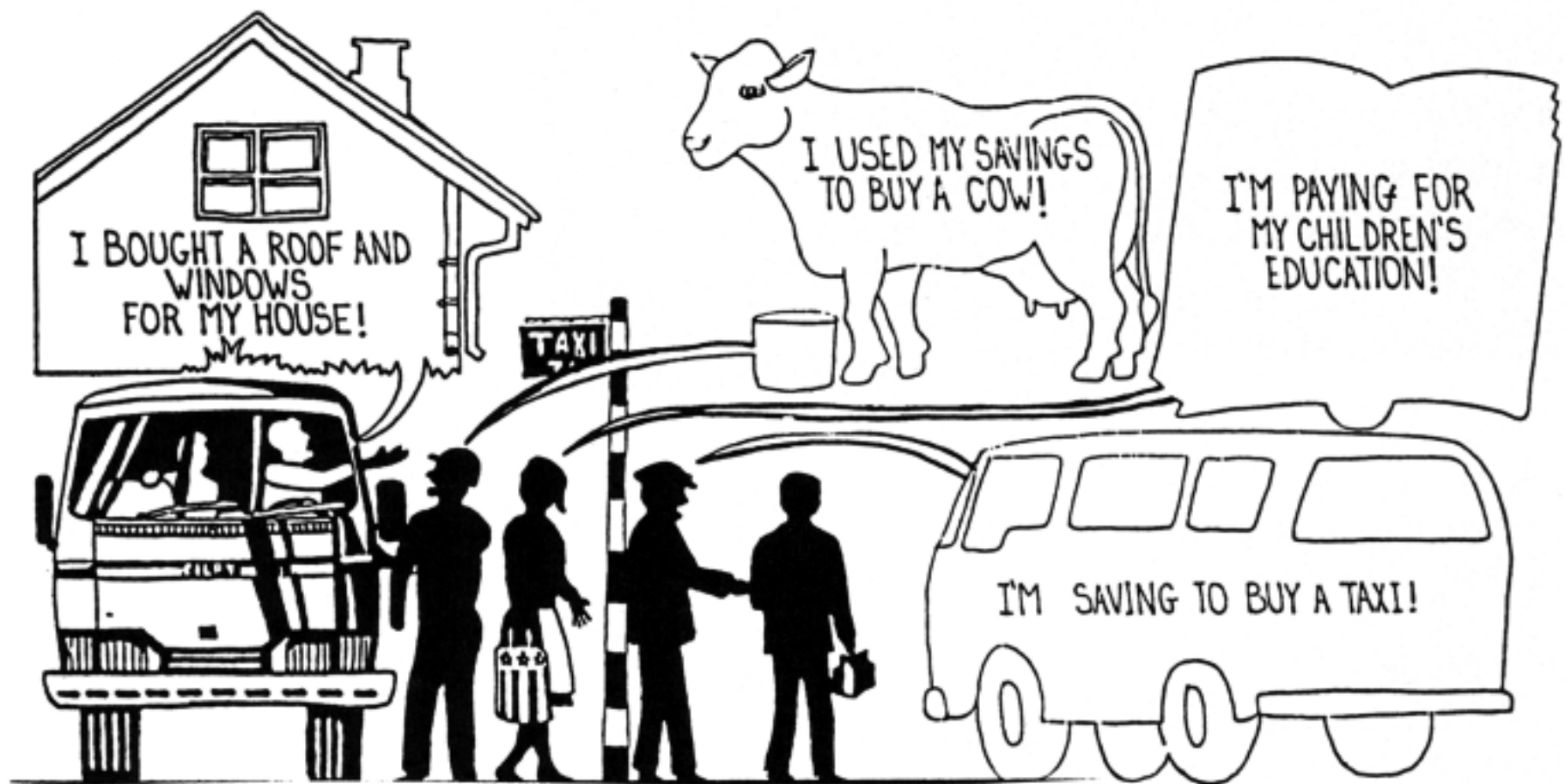
1960 – The Federation of Cuban Women formed with 70 000 members

1975 – The Family Code law was adopted saying there must be equality between men and women in the family

Cuba has helped many liberation struggles, especially in Africa. There is a Cuba Solidarity Committee in South Africa. If you want to offer financial and material assistance for Cuba telephone the ANC Health Department at (011) 330 7205.



Saving makes cents



Graphic: Saccol

Credit unions, like stokvels, play a positive role in providing informal "peoples banks". SPEAK looks at whether this banking system does benefit people

Harriet Mfeka joined her credit union three years ago. Mfeka works as a domestic worker and earns R400 a month. Her credit union was formed in 1987 by domestic workers living in the same area. Today the Nulusapho Credit Union has a membership of 80 domestic workers.

"Before I joined the credit union my daughter was out of school because I did not have the money to pay for school fees. Since I became a member, I was able to send my child back to school with the loan I made. Next year she will be going to nursing college," says Mfeka proudly.

She has also been able to build a house in the Transkei, where the rest of her family lives, with her savings and a loan from her credit union.

"I struggled a great deal before I joined the Nulusapho Credit Union, now I am a woman, I can do things myself," says Mfeka.

The Masakhane Credit Union in Wadeville, Benoni was started in 1987 by pensioners. The members of this credit union meet every week at an Old Age Centre and every member is encour-

aged to save every month. For many it is hard because of the little money pensioners get.

"I was able to save a little at a time. With my savings and a loan I went to Durban on a pensioners' outing. It brought me great pleasure being able to do this and not worry about high interest rates," says Priscilla Nkosi.

She made a second loan to help pay for her daughter's study fees.

"It took me a long time to pay off the loan and save at the same time but I could," added Nkosi.

Credit unions are co-operatives where people save money together, like banks. "It is different from banks because it is democratically controlled by all its members," explains Olivia Henwood of the South African Savings and Credit Co-operative League (Saccol).

"And unlike banks, credit unions operate in the townships and squatter areas," adds Henwood.

"Every month members save their money with the credit union. The monthly savings of members are deposited into a joint banking account.

"Members can take out loans, which are agreed



Photo: Compliments Saccol

Pensioner Priscilla Nkosi speaks to a Saccol fieldworker

on by everyone in the union and must be paid back.”

Henwood said the interest on loans is much lower than banks.

“Everyone can therefore afford to take out loans, pay them back and save at the same time.”

“The union’s members share a common bond, for example, people who work together, such as mine-workers, farm-workers, teachers; or live in the same area. Because of it, members share a sense of mutual concern, loyalty and trust,” adds Henwood.

She said any group of people who share a “common bond” can start their own credit union. Saccol will assist the group in setting up the union.

“We also assist and show the different credit unions how to audit their books.”

Members of the credit unions say they prefer this system to stokvels because they are more formal and there is a strict control over the money. Many say they learn skills about working with money.

“Many credit unions are run in members’ houses, community organisations or at the workplace,” said Henwood. ★

If you want find out more about credit unions contact Saccol:

- **Western Cape**
76 Long Street, Cape Town 8001
Telephone: (021) 23 8360
- **Northern Cape**
377 Long Street, Nababeep 8265
Telephone: (0251) 38 847
- **Eastern Cape**
27 Alexander Avenue, Umtata
Telephone: (0471) 31 0284
- **Transvaal**
PO Box 4989, Johannesburg 2000
Telephone: (011) 333 8204

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If you answer the question below you could be in line to win a wonderful book.

Famous feminist Egyptian writer Nawal El Saadawi’s book called “*God Dies by the Nile*”, or “*Makeba: My Story*” as told by our very own South African singer Miriam Makeba to James Hall. Both books bring with them stories of strong women coping with tough lives. Don’t miss this chance to win one!

What is the most enjoyable book you have ever read, or have had read to you?

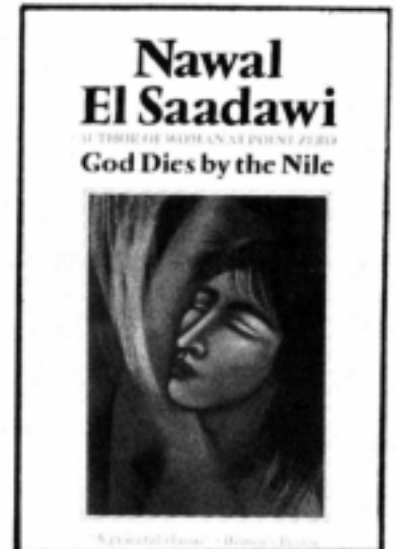
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Phambili Books

Rules of the competition: The decision of the judges is final. This competition is only open to people living in Southern Africa. Employees and relatives of employees of SPEAK are not allowed to enter. The closing date is 1 September 1993. The winner will be announced in the October issue of SPEAK.

Every year hundreds of women in South Africa die from cancer of the cervix. SPEAK looks at what causes it and how it can be prevented.

CERVICAL CANCER

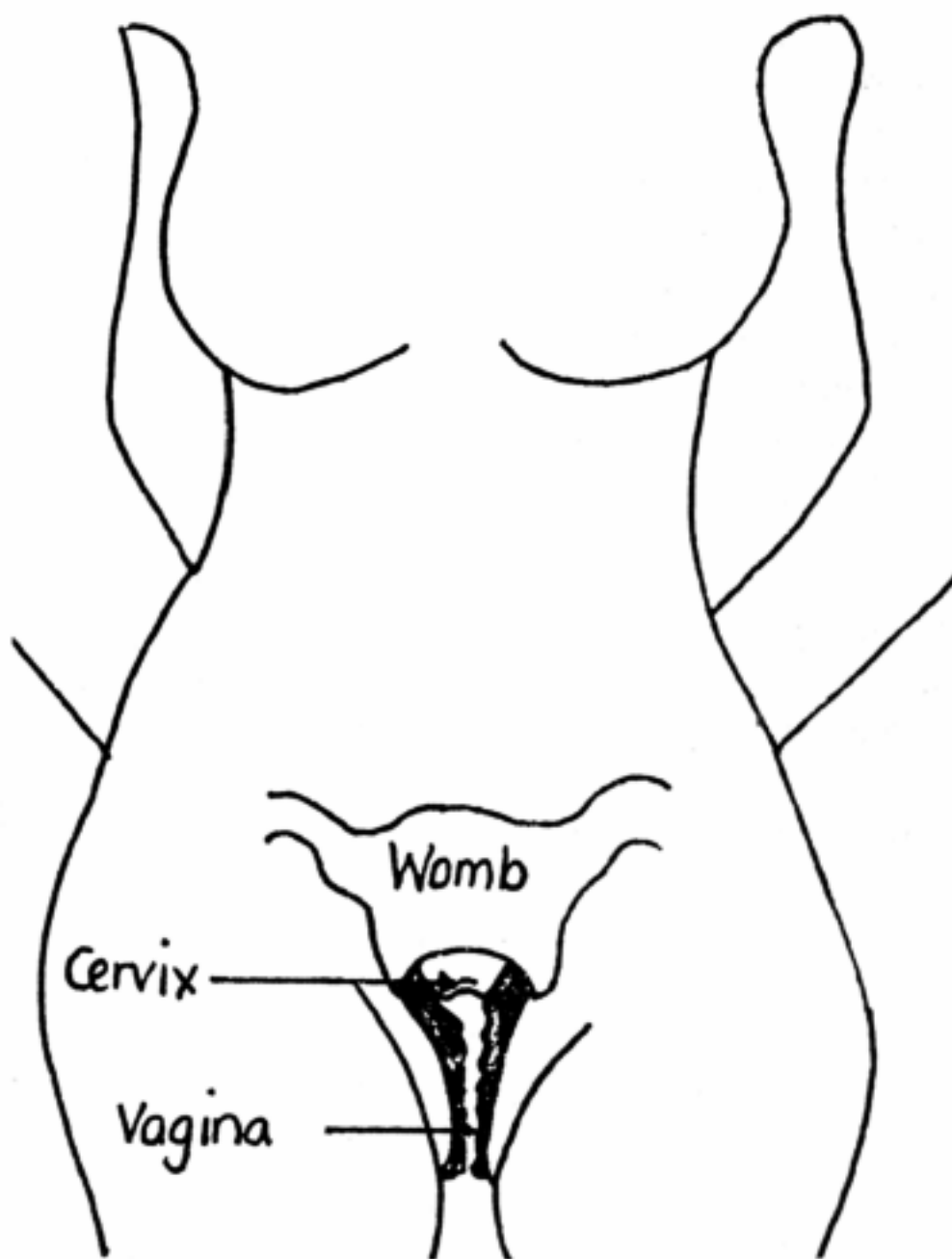
What is Cancer of the Cervix?

The cervix is the opening at the lower end of the womb (uterus). It is at the top of the vagina. Many women get cancer of the cervix, a disease that may prevent a woman from having children, and can cause death. Cancer is a disease which destroys the healthy cells in the body. When cancer of the cervix starts, the healthy cells slowly change into cancer cells. The cancer cells begin to destroy the cervix, eventually spreading to the rest of the body. Once the cancer starts spreading it is difficult to treat. If it is discovered at the early stages it can be cured.

What are the signs of Cervical Cancer?

The signs only show once the uterus has already become infected with cancer. Some of the signs are:

- bleeding and pain after sex
- bleeding between periods
- pain and backache
- a discharge which smells bad
- bleeding past child-bearing age



How do women get Cervical Cancer?

The cause of cancer of the cervix is not known. However, sexual intercourse does spread the germ that causes cancer of the cervix, as the germ comes out with the man's sperm. The chances of getting cervical cancer are

increased in the following situations:

- having sex from a young age
- having many sexual partners
- many pregnancies
- genital warts or herpes
- smoking
- stress

How can Cervical Cancer be prevented?

You can have a PAP smear. A PAP smear is a test that helps to see if there are any changes in the cells of the cervix. These cell changes are not cancer, but if left untreated they can develop into cancer.

In a PAP smear the cells are scraped off the cervix. These cells are sent to a laboratory where they are tested. If abnormal cells are found, it can be treated easily. If you have cancer of the cervix it can be completely cured if found in the early stages. If the cancer has spread to the inside of your body, you will need to have a hysterectomy (removal of your womb). The removal of the womb does not effect a woman's sexuality. It will mean that it will not be possible to become pregnant. It is important to have PAP smears to prevent cancer from developing.

Where do you get PAP smears?

Although PAP smears are very cheap to do and would save the lives of many women in South Africa, there is no National Health Policy on PAP smears. In fact PAP smears are usually only done in hospitals and clinics when the doctors and nurses think that a woman has cancer. Often this is too late.

Until there is proper legislation regarding PAP smears, women must insist on having a PAP smear when they go to the clinic or public hospital. It is advisable for women to have PAP smears once a year. If this is not possible then once every two years.

**In the interests
of women's
health we must
organise around
PAP smears to
save our lives.**

For more information you can contact the Cancer Association of South Africa at their national office (011) 4032825 or one of their branches:

Durban (031) 259525

Pretoria (012) 3293036

Cape Town (021) 6895347

Port Elizabeth (041) 351212

Bloemfontein (051) 477535

Tvl (011) 6465628 ☉

What to expect when going for a PAP smear

PAP smears are not painful. However, they may be slightly uncomfortable. You will be asked to lie down on your back. The doctor will then ask you to bend your knees and let your legs drop open. A metal object called a speculum will be put into your vagina. It is closed when it is put into the vagina.

When it is inside the vagina it is opened so that the cervix can be seen through the speculum. A light is shone into the vagina in order to see the cervix.

A small wooden stick is used to scrape off cells from the cervix. The cells are then placed onto a piece of glass to be sent off to the laboratory for testing. The speculum is then removed from the vagina. When you receive the results from the PAP smear you will be told whether you need to see the doctor again.

It is important to have a PAP smear. Remember that cervical cancer is curable if detected in its early stages. If you leave it too late you may need to have an operation.

HEALTH BRIEFS

Coffee affects your eating habits

If you eat all the time and drink a lot of coffee, the caffeine in the coffee is probably contributing to your desire to eat a lot. A study of 171 people with eating disorders found that those who drink eight or more cups of coffee everyday, felt the need to eat a lot more than those who did not drink that much coffee.

AIDS – Botswana in trouble

The spread of AIDS in Botswana is among the fastest in the world.

Botswana's National AIDS Control Programme say last year more than 60 000 people, out a population of 1.3 million, had been infected.

Treatment for the mentally ill

Thousands of mentally ill people around the world are not getting the treatment and help they need.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO),

about half a billion people are mentally ill. Most of them live in developing countries where health services are not coping with most health problems.

High rate of cancer in Natal

In Natal, cancer claims the lives of more children than in other parts of South Africa. Natal has the highest rate of kidney cancer, cervical cancer and skin cancer. It also has the highest rate of gullet (the food passage from the mouth to the stomach) cancer.

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As a matter of fact...

Cosatu demands child-care

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) is planning to put pressure on companies and the government to supply money for child-care facilities in the community and at workplaces. Cosatu is also demanding 20 days paid child-care leave a year, so that working parents can attend to the concerns of their children in emergency situations.



Graphic reproduced from: Sexual and Domestic Violence, Zimbabwe

Dangerous skin creams still on sale

Today, ten years after Zimbabwe banned skin lighteners, some of the creams are still being sold in shops and open markets in Harare. Many of these creams contain more than the accepted amounts of hydroquinone, which can damage your skin. The products are made in neighbouring countries and taken into Zimbabwe.

Rape in marriage: will it be recognised?

The Prevention of Family Violence Bill, was recently put to Parliament. The Bill argues for the law to see rape in marriage as a criminal offence. The law will make it possible for a husband to be convicted if he rapes his wife. The Bill will give a judge or magistrate the power to grant a restraining order against a husband/wife on application by his or her partner, ordering him/her not to do certain things.

Women kill abusers – self defence?

Canada's Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies has called on their government to include battered women who kill their abusers in its legal definition of self defence. The association which provides services to women Canadian prisons says "these women acted out of desperation and killed their partners. A review of the law is the only way to examine how abuse has been looked at by the criminal justice system."

Cuba struggles to celebrate heroes day

This year Cuba will not be holding big celebrations to mark one of the most important days in its history. This is because of the country's serious economic problems. July 26 is the anniversary of the 1953 guerilla attack which started the revolution that led to the fall of the right-wing government and the establishment of the Peoples' Republic of Cuba in 1959.

Information from local and international publications

TAXI TALK

So you thought black lesbians did not exist? Well you were wrong.

Neither are they products of a "poisonous Western culture". We are women who love women, women who respect women, women who believe we have a right to choose who to love - instead of whom to hate. We come in all sizes and shapes. Hard for some of you to believe, huh?

We have been and still are called names, just like most women are: witches and homebreakers who can't find a man. That we only need to be f....d by a man in order to come to our senses.

People think we are women who are not comfortable with who we are, so we try to be men. They think we only wear trousers (we wear whatever we choose to) so we can strap on fake penises. We are women, we do not want to be men. We love as women and live as women. We are so comfortable with being women, we love being women so much that loving women is the next logical step. Women cannot deny they feel close to other women

Ntombi, a young black lesbian activist speaks out on women's right to choose who to love.



and find it easier sharing their deepest feelings and secrets with women. You love your sister, your girlfriend don't you? So what's wrong with us lesbians loving other women? Is it because we make love and have sex with women? Well, that is simply part of expressing our love and passion for women, just as much as heterosexual women do.

We are women who live in constant fear

of being found out. We fear being isolated or even beaten up. Those of us who are open about our sexuality have to deal with a lot of discrimination from our families, friends, society and the law. Nevertheless, some of us do defy people's attitude towards us. We come out, hold hands, kiss and love in public, in the privacy of gay and lesbian clubs and our homes. To all lesbians out there, especially black lesbians, I say don't let them silence you. You have a right to exist and to love women. ♀

NOTICES

A call to all South African Women

"The erotic is everything that gives us passion and feeling. It is in making love, in giving birth, in the sunlight on a bare forearm. It is creativity, it is the celebration of life. It is the force that gives us hope, even in the worst circumstances. It is powerful, alive and it is in all of us."

This is the view of a group of women who are putting together a collection of erotic writing by South African women.

They are looking for erotic poems, stories, sketches by women about your wildest dreams: a brief, special moment; your forbidden thoughts and desires; the images, smells, memories, colours, that turn you on, delight you, make you feel sensually and fully alive...

Write about it and send it before October 30 1993 to:

**Eros does Erotica
P O Box 132
Kalk Bay
7990**

If you'd like your work returned, please send a self-addressed envelope and include a stamp.

Museums - a different way to learn

Museums are an interesting way to learn more about your school. There are museums of history, zoology, geography and even economics. Your nearest public library will be able to give you a list of the museums in your area.

Many universities have museums that are open to the public. Wits University for example, has museums of medicine, archaeology and zoology.

If you want more information or a tour of these, contact: The Schools Liaison Office at (011) 716 3597

Voter Education

Project Vote of the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) and the National Democratic Institute of International Affairs have brought our two handbooks: Manual for Community Educators and Manual for Trainers. CDS has been training organisations and individuals on how to educate their communities about voting. **For more information write to:**
**Centre for Development Studies
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17
Bellville
7535
or call: (021) 959 2151**

Youth Drama

Tswelopele Library in Maokeng, Kroonstad, is touring in schools with the production of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, performed by unemployed youths. The aim of staging the production for schools is to make it easier for matric pupils to understand the play.

**For further details contact:
Thomas Mokoena at (0562)
41141 extension 256**



IMPORTANT DATES FOR WOMEN'S ACTION

March 7-14

National
Breastfeeding Week

March 8

International Women's Day

April 7

World Health Day

May 1

Workers Day

May 24

Women's International Day
for Disarmament

May 28

International Day for
Women's Health

July 11

World Population Day

August 9

National

Women's Day

September 14

Women's Image
in Media Day

September 28

International
Abortion Rights Day

November 25

Day of
No Violence
Against Women

Women Together Are Strong