

# SPEAK

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8 FEB 1989

December 1988 - January 1989

50 cents

Number 22

## WE ARE DYING, MY CHILD



● **Women from Pietermaritzburg  
talk about the war**

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SPEAK Collective members are Gill, Karen, Nise, Phumelele, Shamim and Vanessa. We welcome Helen onto SPEAK Collective. Helen has worked with us for the past year. We also welcome Helen's new baby, Saffiya into the world. May she grow to enjoy peace and justice in South Africa.

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

## Thanks

We thank those people who helped with this issue of SPEAK. They are Lesley, Laura, Nombuso, Nicholas, Patience, and Princess.

Cover photograph by Cedric Nunn, Afrapix

Published by SPEAK Collective

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Dear SPEAK

I am very pleased to read your exciting magazine called SPEAK. Really it shows that we also exist in this world and to be permitted our point of view and attitudes. 'Cause if I can ask a question, why must we be beaten by our husbands? And why must we be raped and murdered? If you can answer me maybe I will be pleased.

Sometimes me as a woman I am pregnant after marriage. Then after that he assaults me for no apparent reason. The next thing the child dies after birth. Then they stand and swear at you that you are a 'witch'. Really I don't know what this world is coming to.

From  
Fikile  
Tembisa, Transvaal

Dear Fikile, you are right. Why should all of this happen to women? We've got to start changing the things that are done to women. And we've got to start now. We need to come together as women to get organised to fight against this violence against women. — SPEAK Collective.

Dear SPEAK

Thank you very much for sending me copies of SPEAK. A lot of people were interested in the topics and they commented that this was a very good magazine for women.

Love  
Yvonne  
Johannesburg

Thanks, Yvonne. We hope that more and more women start to buy and read SPEAK. And we want women to write to us to tell us what they would like to see more of in SPEAK. So please tell this to the women you sell SPEAK to! — SPEAK Collective.

Dear Friends

We have been swopping SPEAK for our magazine called 'Voices Rising' for some time. But I wanted to write and say how good SPEAK is.

You've developed a really strong and creative way of dealing with serious and difficult issues. I often find myself photocopying different articles and sending them to other women and groups in our network in different parts of the world. The 'Breaking the Silence' issue was the best article on wife-beating that I've seen. And the article on AIDS is also excellent.

Perhaps one day you'd be interested in sharing something about your work and approach as a publishing and education collective for "Voices Rising"?

In Solidarity

Lynda Yanz

Women's Program of the International Council for Adult Education  
Canada

Dear Lynda, Your letter has certainly made us feel good! We are very pleased that SPEAK is useful and is reaching far and wide. It would be great to share ideas. We include your address for SPEAK readers in case there are people who would like to find out more about your magazine called 'Voices Rising'. Write to: Women's Program of the International Council for Adult Education, c/o the Participatory Research Group, 394 Euclid Avenue, Suite 308, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6G 2S9. — SPEAK Collective.

Dear SPEAK

The University of Transkei (UNITRA) Women's Association is asking advice from SPEAK about the following issues. Since we are still a new association here at school, the problem is that the association does not get any funds from the administration. The thing is I would like to get information about the organisations that can be willing to give us money so that we can advance our association.

Our objectives are to unite all women, to fight male chauvenism, to strive towards bridging the gap between men and women students, for women to identify themselves with other women nationally and to groom women to be independent. Since it is one of the association's aims to identify with other women nationally, I want to know if there are any relevant organisations that we can identify our society with.

We also want to subscribe to SPEAK so please send us the information regarding the way in which we can subscribe. I would also want to know if you have any progressive women's films.

Yours faithfully

Secretary of UNITRA Women's Association

Dear friends, it is very exciting to hear that you are organising women at UNITRA. We want to wish you strength and solidarity. We are sending as much information as we can for you by post. It should reach you soon. We look forward to hearing from you again soon! — SPEAK Collective. ●



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The fighting in Natal has affected lives of many people. They all have stories to tell.

Photograph by Cedric Nunn, Afrapix

# We Are Dying, My Child

**Women from Pietermaritzburg talk about  
the war**

"I heard a big bang at the door. I jumped out of bed. It was midnight. There was shouting and swearing outside. Men outside demanded that I open the door. They wanted R10.00 for joining Inkatha. I did not have R10.00. I thought, 'God it is my turn to die today.' It was just me and my three children inside. My eldest son was at college. I was scared. My children were brave. They did not cry although they knew they could die at any time. I did not open the door. The men left after a lot of swearing. At 4 a.m. I took my

children and ran to a relative's house. Two hours later I saw a cloud of smoke. It was my house. It burned to ashes with all I had inside. A month later police shot and killed my eldest son. They said he had a dangerous weapon. I demanded that police show me the weapon, but they could not." This is what a woman from Harewood, near Pietermaritzburg, said. The fighting in her area has affected her life. And it has affected thousands of people in Natal. They all have stories to tell about the fighting that has turned Natal into a war area.

## Why So Much Fighting?

Natal has become one of the places where death has become a daily bread. More than 1000 people have been killed in 1988 in Pietermaritzburg. Many, many women have been raped. And more than 7000 are homeless. People's houses have been burned down. And people are forced to run away from their houses in fear of being killed. These things have happened in Pietermaritzburg. And they have happened all over Natal in places like Hammarsdale, Ntshongweni, Molweni, Klaarwater, KwaMakhutha and Magabheni. Some people say the fight is between Inkatha on one side and United Democratic Front (UDF) and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) on the other. Others say it is black on black violence. But many people say the fighting is between Inkatha and members of the community. There is also another side of this fighting. That is, many people say the police and the government are seen to be sympathetic to Inkatha. Since the fighting started many UDF and COSATU members have been detained and restricted. The UDF has been banned and COSATU has been restricted. But Inkatha is not restricted. Inkatha is given time on radio and T.V. to promote itself.

Earlier this year COSATU, UDF and Inkatha leaders met to talk about peace in Pietermaritzburg. But there were problems with these talks. One of them was that many UDF leaders were detained. This meant that they could not be part of the peace talks.

## A Visit To Ashdown

SPEAK wanted to ask women how they cope during these times. So we travelled to Ashdown, a township outside Pietermaritzburg, to meet women who live in a war area.

"Siyafa wemntanami. We are dying my child," one woman from Ashdown told SPEAK. "This hard life started two years ago. This whole Edendale area was very quiet until people were forced to join Inkatha." Ashdown women told us how groups of men go to people's houses hunting those they suspect to be UDF members. One woman said, "If you do not want to be an Inkatha member they say you are a UDF member. Then you

could be killed and your house burnt. Many people have joined Inkatha because they fear for their lives."

It is not only a person who is a member of UDF or COSATU who gets killed. It is often the whole family. This is what a priest from Elandskop, near Pietermaritzburg, said, "On the second floor of Edendale Hospital there is a little girl. Her home was attacked in the middle of the night. They shot and killed her sister and mother, shot and wounded her father. She was shot through the back of the neck and is paralysed. She is only seven years old. She does not understand the politics of Inkatha or UDF."

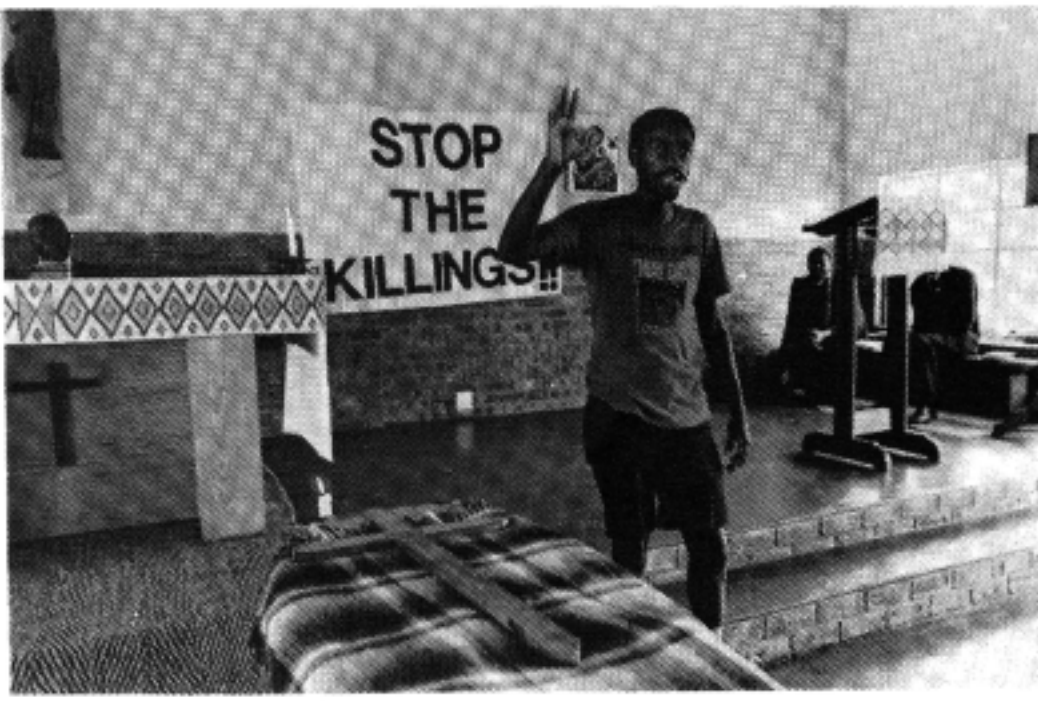
## Is It Different For A Woman To Be In This War?

Many women had never worked outside the home before. Now that they have lost husbands and sons in the war, they have to look for jobs outside the home for the first time.

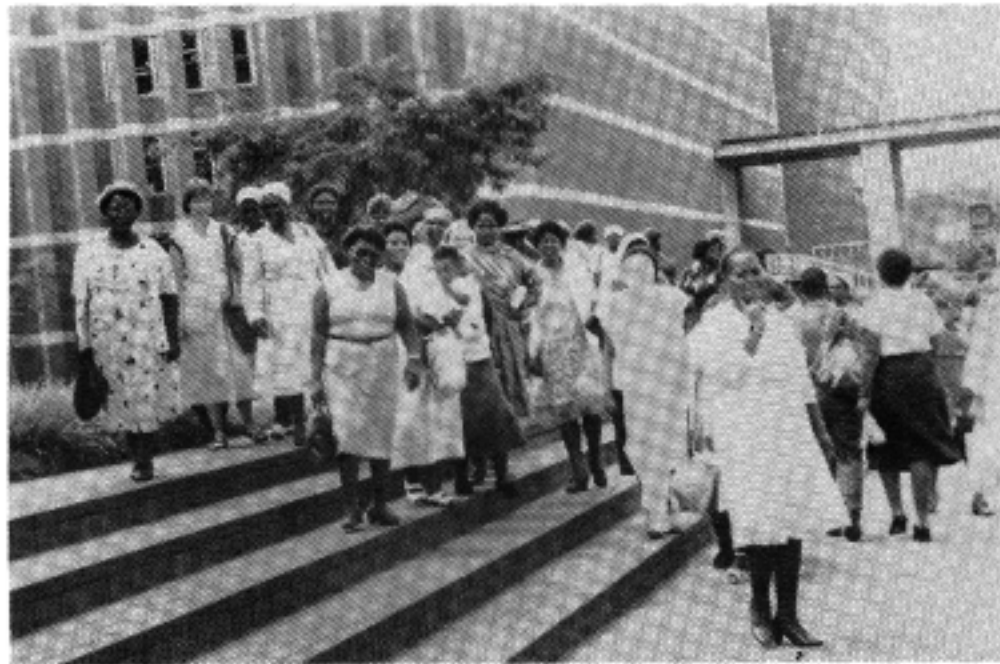
Most women we spoke to stay at home while everybody else is at work and children at school. They look after the young children and the homes. They are there all the time. It is not easy for them to go and hide.

"Ibhemile" which means "there is a smoke" is the slogan that makes everybody aware that there is trouble. "You see how old I am? But you cannot run like I do," said one woman. "You cannot sit in the house and not go and help. It may well be your child dying there. We take anything we can find to fight with and go for it. We have to defend our lives and our homes," said a woman from Ashdown.

Women have to deal with an extra fear of rape in the attacks that happen. This is what happened to the Dladla family in Mpumalanga township near Hammarsdale, which is between Pietermaritzburg and Durban. A group of about 16 armed men wearing balaclavas hammered on the front door at ten o'clock at night. When Mrs Dladla opened the door one of these men pointed a gun at her and demanded money. More men, also armed with guns, spears and other weapons burst into the house. They also demanded money. They demanded to see Mrs Dladla's 15 year old son who was said to be a member of the UDF affiliated Hammarsdale Youth Congress. Mrs Dladla told them that he



The message is clear - STOP THE KILLINGS



Women from all over Natal went to see the Attorney General demanding that justice be done.



Thousands and thousands of people have been made homeless because of the war

hadn't been at home for three weeks, and that he was staying in another township near Durban. The men then took turns in raping Mrs Dladla, and her three daughters. After being raped, the women were then forced to stand in the passage and watch as the men set fire to the room where their 102 year old grandmother was sleeping. She died in the fire.

Another woman from Pietermaritzburg said, "I have heard that women are raped while their husbands are tied under the beds in the same room." There is also evidence that some young women are raped in front of their parents. Others are kidnapped and kept away as sex slaves.

### Living In Fear

As we talked to Ashdown women we could feel the fear they lived in. One woman said, "Let us not meet in my house. It is near the bus stop. Some people may want to know who you are. Your car even has a different number plate. People will be suspicious."

### Women Together Are Strong

In spite of all these problems, women from Ashdown are very strong. They spoke about the importance of coming together. They said, "Before this fighting started, we hardly knew each other in this township. But we have learnt that the only way to be strong is to come together and help each other. We now come together and discuss how best we can help each other. Together, we support those families who have lost their loved ones. There is one family that we discovered where the mother and the father were killed and young children were left alone. We each contribute whatever we have to make sure that they survive. We bring anything, mealie meal, sugar, anything really."

### No Justice

Justice is not done to the killers. These killers kill freely. The courts just warn them and tell them to stop killing. These vigilantes even come to court with their guns, but they are not arrested. "We cannot trust even the law. We have only ourselves to trust," said the Ashdown women. They went on to say, "We went there to the Attorney General together

with other women from different areas in Natal. We went to demand that justice be done. We wanted to know why killers are not arrested."

Ashdown women showed us a school nearby. They told us how the special police known as 'kitskonstabels' one day shot and wounded children at that school. The community stayed away from work the next day in protest. They demanded that the 'kitskonstabels' be removed from the school. It was after this stayaway that the mayor of Pietermaritzburg admitted in public that there was a crisis in the area.

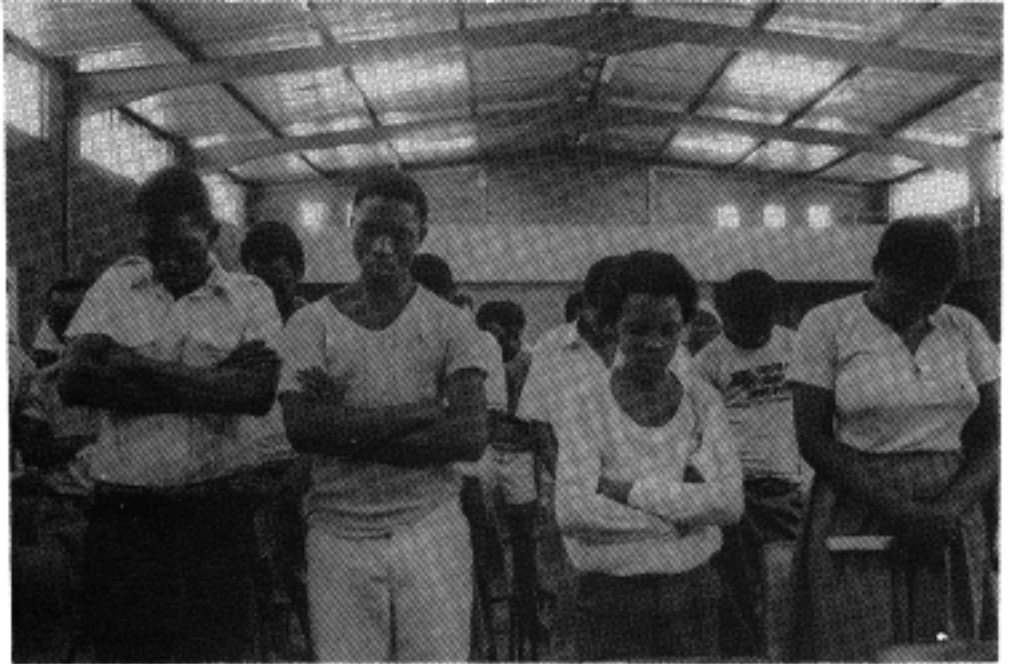
### **Why Are People Forced To Join Inkatha?**

Inkatha sees itself as the only true organisation of Zulu speaking people. It wants as many members as possible and has used force to gain membership. But where townships do not fall under KwaZulu Government, Inkatha does not find it easy to win supporters. This is so because people in these areas do not depend on the KwaZulu government for things like houses, business licences and schools. And so in those areas people do not have to join Inkatha. Part of Inkatha's problem is that the major townships in Pietermaritzburg like Ashdown, Sobantu, Edendale and Imbali do not fall under KwaZulu government.

### **Things Turn Sour For Inkatha**

900 Sarmcol workers were fired during their strike in 1985. The people of Pietermaritzburg called a consumer boycott in support of the Sarmcol workers. Inkatha opposed the consumer boycott. People began to ask themselves which side Inkatha is on. Is it on the side of the bosses and the government or is it on the side of the people? As one woman from Ashdown puts it, "Why is Inkatha attacking us each time we demand our rights from the government and the bosses? We do not understand how an organization claiming to be fighting for our liberation stops us from demanding this very same liberation."

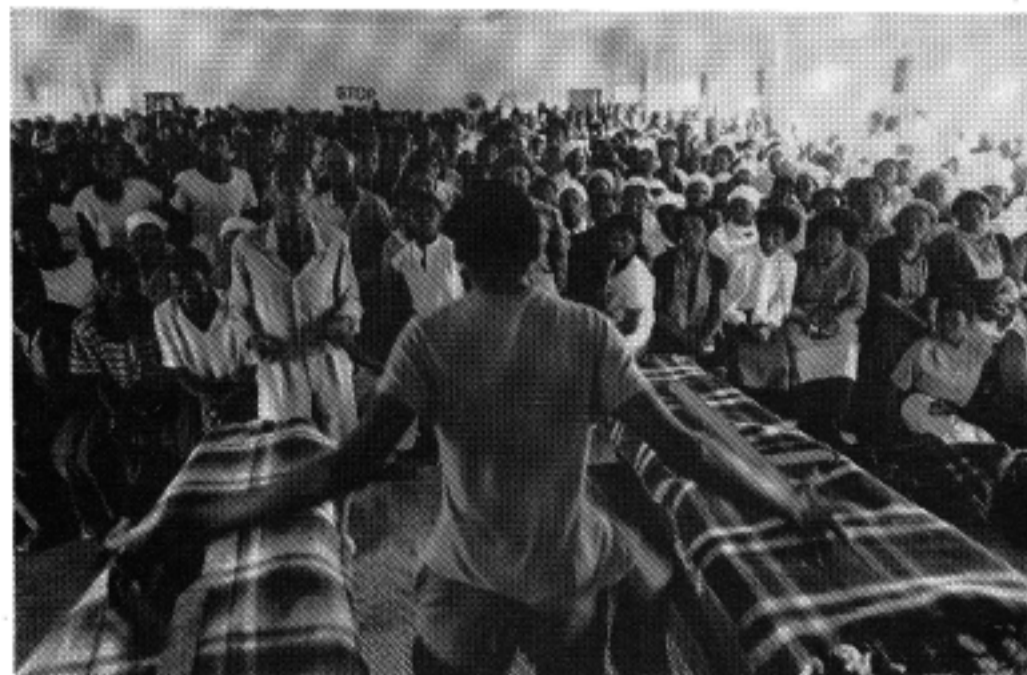
Because of its actions, Inkatha has lost support in Pietermaritzburg. As Inkatha can no longer peacefully convince the people that it is fighting for their rights, it began forcing



**Edendale residents pray as they open a meeting to discuss the war.**



**A woman stands next to what was once her home. She has lost her husband, daughter and home in attacks by alleged Inkatha vigilantes.**



**Youth toyi toyi at a funeral of their comrades at Mpophomeni.**

**Photographs by Cedric Nunn, Afrapix.**



Women give each other support at a funeral at Mpophomeni near Pietermaritzburg.

Photograph by Cedric Nunn, Afrapix.

them into joining. One of the women we spoke to was an Inkatha member before the fighting started. She said, "I joined Inkatha because I thought it was fighting for our rights as people. When I saw people being forced at gun point to join, I changed my mind. I am no longer a member."

### **A Turning Point - The Community Fights Back**

The women we spoke to told us that Inkatha started attacking UDF and COSATU members from 1985 in Pietermaritzburg. It was after the consumer boycott to support Sarmcol workers. For two years the community did not really fight back against Inkatha attacks. But this changed in the middle of 1987. The women told us, "A young school girl from Sinathingi was stabbed and brutally killed with pangas and spears a few meters away from her home. She was killed in front of her parents. The killers wanted her brother who is a UDF member. The killers further killed the girl's father right in the middle of preparations for the girl's funeral. They were buried on the same day." The father was a COSATU shopsteward.

### **Fighting Spreads All Over Natal**

People in other areas in Natal face a similar problem. Places like KwaMakhutha have seen a lot of bloodshed. A year ago a Ntuli family was wiped out because their son was a member of UDF.

Up until now people are making affidavits about how they have been beaten and relatives killed for not being members of Inkatha. This year more than 200 people have died and more than 70 000 are homeless around Durban because of this violence. People live in fear of death all the time. Women are often the ones looking after children and are not able to run away as easily. As one woman from Inanda puts it, "I slept in the bush with my newborn baby because vigilantes came to the house accusing my mother of hiding comrades. They said they were coming at night to kill them. There was no way I could face that."

### **The Fruits of Apartheid**

We live in a country where people are divided all the time. People are divided by colour. People are further divided by whether they are Xhosa, Zulu or Sotho and are placed into



little bantustans. The government likes to divide people because it makes it more difficult for people to unite in a struggle for a new South Africa. The fighting in the townships serves the interest of the government. In fact, this fighting helps the government to say that there is reason for a State of Emergency because of black on black violence. The idea of black on black violence takes the attention away from the fact that the struggle is for political power. It is not just senseless killing as we are often made to believe.

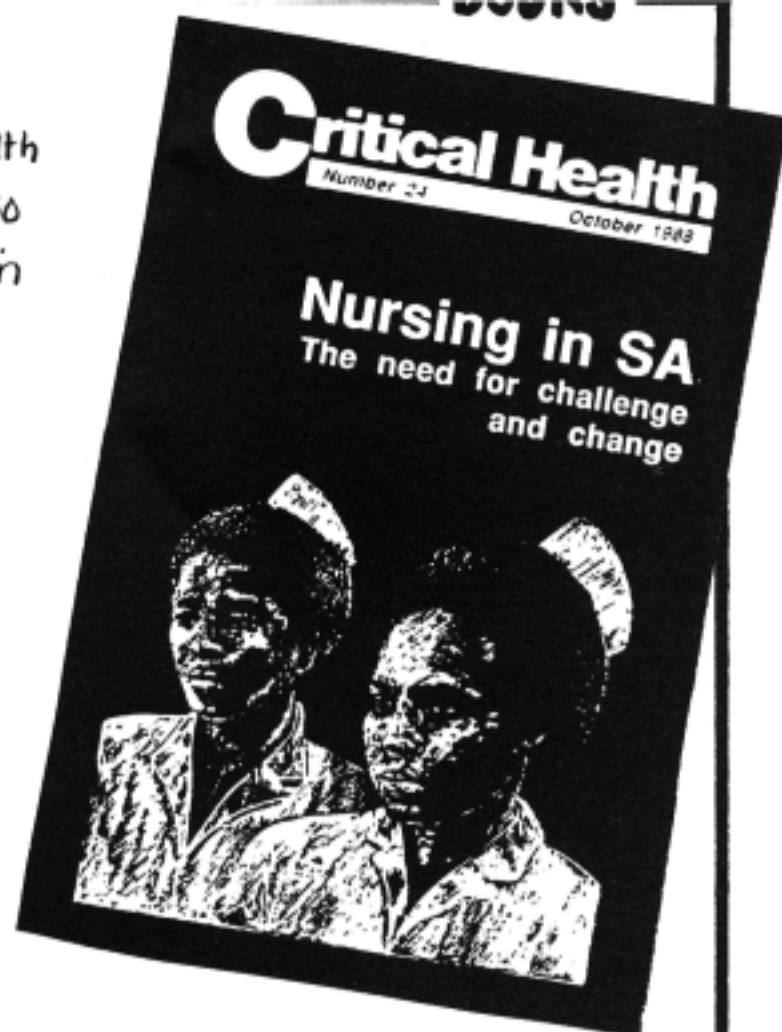
Many people think that these struggles will go on for a long time. But the Ashdown women say, "All these battles have taught us that we need to belong to organisations that bring people together to fight for better lives." ●

## TO THE RESISTING PEOPLE OF PIETERMARITZBURG

*Brothers and sisters  
Mothers and Fathers of Africa  
Tell me  
How long are we going to stand this brutality  
In the hands of the so-called our leaders?  
Look at what is happening in  
Hammarsdale, Inanda  
Kwa-Makhutha and Maritzburg  
People being brutalised  
What have they done?  
Is it because they tell the truth?  
So, let us the oppressed not  
Put more kilo's in our oppression. Let us not  
allow the seeds  
Which have been planted by the  
Enemy to work amongst us.  
Let us not allow these seeds  
To grow into a tight forest  
Which you can't go through.  
Let not mothers stand aside  
While your children need your support.  
Don't stand aside mama  
While you buy a coffin every day  
Like a follower of Jesus mama  
Then follow in his footsteps  
For he died for the truth.  
Let us fight for truth and justice  
Foward with the people's struggle, foward!  
AMANDLA!*

by Sma, a member of the Umlazi  
Branch of the Natal Organisation of Women.

Write to  
Critical Health  
PO. Box 16250  
Doornfontein  
2028



"Injula" is a new journal about culture, politics, and society. It is published in Zulu.  
If you want to know more, write to:  
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Culture and Working Life Project  
University of Natal  
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Durban  
4001

# Yesterday, Today



Lilian Jiyane at the Kinross Commemoration talking about organising women.

Photograph by Cedric Nunn, Afrapix.

## **Kinross Remembered**

Lilian Jiyane of the Federation of Transvaal Women spoke at the Kinross Commemoration rally in Johannesburg in October 1988. 122 miners died at Kinross Mines two years ago in a mine accident. These accidents happen because the bosses do not keep good safety standards. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) is fighting for the right to safe working conditions. Lilian Jiyane spoke of the women we often forget. The wives of the mineworkers also suffer because of migrant labour. And they suffer when their husbands are injured or killed in the mines. She spoke about how important it is to organise mineworkers' wives in the struggle for a just South Africa.

# ay & Tomorrow



The ADJ posters remind passers by that the truth cannot be silenced.

## National Press Day

October 19 is National Press Freedom Day. On October 1977, two newspapers, The World, and The Weekend World were banned by the government. The government also banned 17 organisations opposed to the government, and many people were restricted. And now, eleven years later, the press is still under fire from the government. The Association of Democratic Journalists (ADJ) from the Transvaal region protested against the government crackdown on the media. The ADJ said: "We believe this year has been the worst year since 1977 for Press Freedom."

In this year three newspapers, The New Nation, South and the Weekly Mail, were banned by the government for a period of time. A number of other publications have been taken by the police. Two journalists are still being held in detention without trial under Emergency Regulations. ADJ says: "We believe that people have a right to inform and be informed."



Ma Sisulu is one of the 3 United Democratic Front's presidents. She is also an executive member of the Federation of Transvaal Women.

## Ma Sisulu

Ma Sisulu has fought all her life for a South Africa where no one is oppressed, and where no one goes hungry whether black or white, man or woman. She has suffered imprisonment. She has suffered banning orders. At present she is restricted and cannot take part in political organisations. She is not the only one in her family fighting for freedom. Her son, Zwelakhe Sisulu, has been held in detention by the South African government since December 1986. Her husband, Walter Sisulu, has been in prison for the past 26 years. She has two children living in exile. The Sisulu family has been awarded the Carter-Menil Human Rights Award. She has also received another award for herself. We celebrate these awards with Ma Sisulu and her family. Ma Sisulu turned 70 years old

in October. Happy Birthday, Ma Sisulu! ●



# Women in Bolivia

Up on the hillsides of La Paz you can see the shacks that the poor people live in. There are hundreds and hundreds of shacks where there is no running water and no proper roads. And where children grow up with holes in their clothes, and hunger in their tummies. It is like many places in South Africa. La Paz is a big city in Bolivia, South America. It is yet another country when the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. All the poorest people are Native American Indians who were the first people to live in Bolivia. The Spanish came and took control of Bolivia hundreds of years ago, in 1538. They ruled over the American Indians. Spain now no longer rules over Bolivia. But even

up to today, the richest and most powerful families are those from the first Spanish conquerors.

Every day early in the morning thousands of women wind their way down the hillsides to the city of La Paz. Some women settle down for a day of selling in the market place. But most of the women work as domestics in the homes of the rich. And thousands more women cannot get jobs.

For many years Bolivian women have been active in the struggle for better lives. They have fought for better health care, food, housing, education. They have fought for the right to have a voice and a

vote in the unions and organisations. The domestic workers have formed a union to fight for better wages and working conditions. The women support each other in the struggle. In some shanty towns of Bolivia women started soup kitchens. Some women would do the cooking for a few families, so that other women could go out to look for work.

A big problem for women in La Paz has been that more than half of the women cannot read and write. Mostly it is the boys who get to carry on at school, and who learn to read and write. The official language in Bolivia is Spanish. But very few of the Indian women know how to speak Spanish. They have grown up speaking an Indian language, either Quechua or Aymara. So some women of La Paz decided to do something about this. They started a programme for teaching the women to read and write. Every week you hear lots of laughter and talking as many women, old and young, meet up for their classes. There are lots of bright colours. For the women of Bolivia wear the most beautiful brightly coloured shawls called mantas. And their black bowler hats offer shade in the sun! There are babies and young children everywhere. Babies are on women's backs, children play in the sand and run

around while their mothers have their classes.

All in all there are 12 000 Bolivian women involved in learning to read and write. Some of the classes have 200 women in them. But the women don't just keep what they have learnt to the classroom. The women put their new writing into action. For example, on one day the women made posters telling people about polio, and how children should have injections to prevent them getting polio. And then they took off walking around the shanty town with the posters to tell other women about polio.

The books that these women's literacy groups use help with reading and writing. But they also talk about many important things. Like health problems. And housing problems. And they also tell about the lives of the women who have been important in Bolivia's history. The groups are an important meeting place for the women. The women learn to read and write. And they also learn how to organise to have more control over their lives. As we say in South Africa, **Literacy for Knowledge and Literacy for Power!**

**SPEAK** would like to thank Louise and Michelle for the help they gave with this article. ●

**Women march through the streets with posters about polio. Photographs by Michelle Friedman.**





Mary weaving a tapestry.

# An Artist Called Mary

Mary Shabalala designs and weaves the most beautiful tapestries you have ever seen. You just have to see them to believe it. So many colours that make your heart warm up. Mary lives at Rorke's Drift, near Dundee in Natal. She works as a weaver at the Evangelical Lutheran Church's Art and Craft Centre at Rorke's Drift. We travelled there to meet Mary.

Mary told us her story about how she came to be a weaver of tapestries. "I was born in 1941. I was an illegitimate child. So from the time I was small, I was sent to my grandmother. She brought me up, supported me and sent me to school. She paid for my education with the money that she got from selling tobacco. I did up to Standard 6. Then my grandmother decided

she was not able to do a lot of things at home and she needed me at home to help her. Even though I still wanted to go back to school, she refused for me to do so. I stayed at home for 3 years helping my grandmother. Then I asked her permission to go and be a cook at a school, and she allowed me to go." The school where Mary worked started an art school at Mapumulo. Then the art school moved to Rorke's Drift. Mary moved there as well.

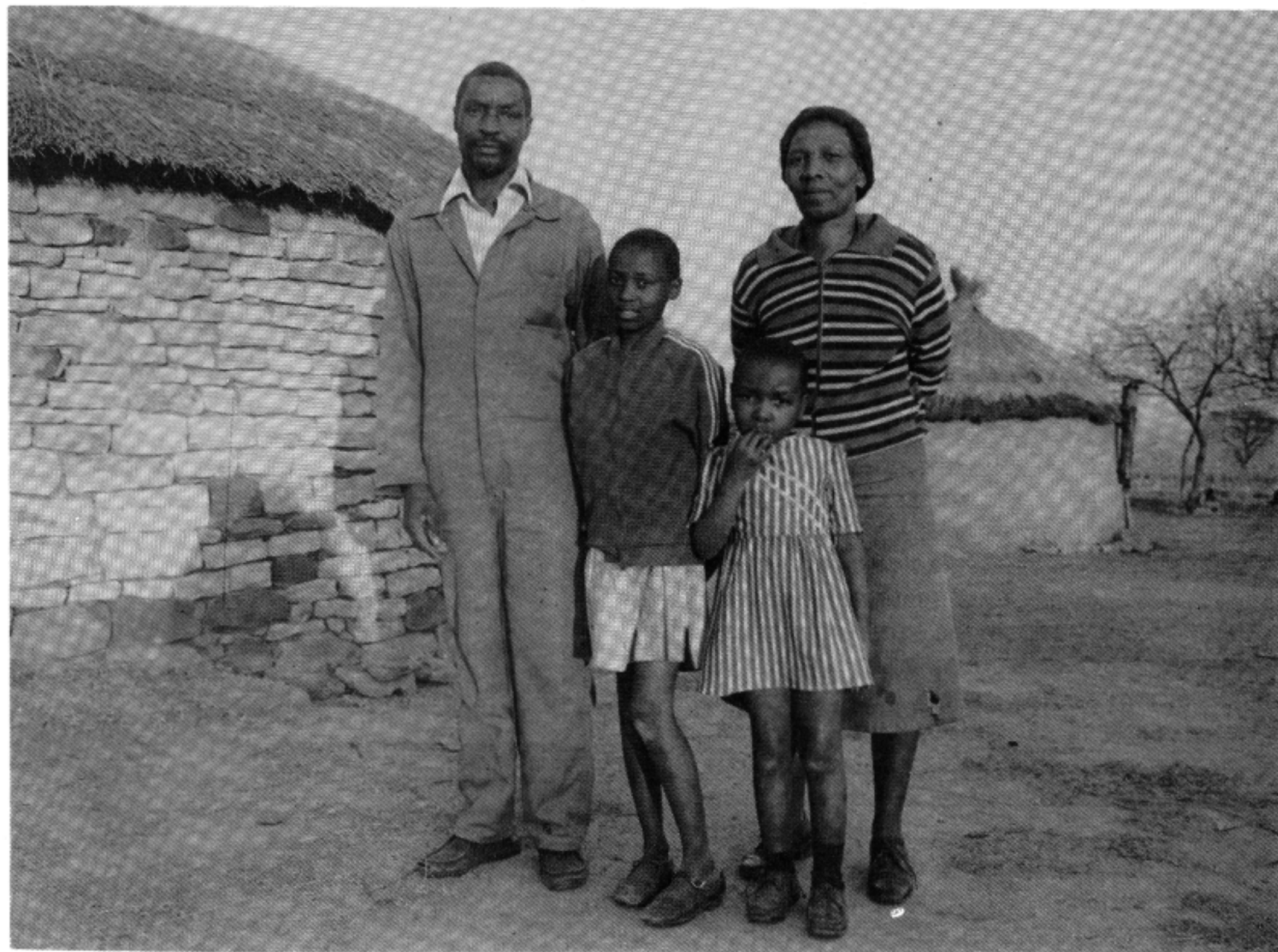
"I got married in 1963. I got 6 children, 3 boys and 3 girls. My husband never had a steady job as he became ill. He has ever since been at home. When he became ill, I was then able to come here at the art centre. Then I first started making carpets. I made one carpet. Then I started making tapestries on a different machine. Well, from my working, I was able to support my children and send them to school. And I was

able to support my husband until now."

"I like my job. It is easy for me when I leave home, knowing that I am familiar with my job. And when I have finished doing it I am going to get some money. When I am not feeling well, I know that when I get to work I am able to sit down and only use my hands. We do not start working very early in the morning like in the factories where they have to rush all the time. I am also able to use my own ideas when making designs. And choose all the colours I feel would be nice for the design. And also get ideas from the other weavers about the colours to use for the tapestry. Some tapestries take many weeks to make. When it is finished I become very happy and also nervous because I always think that maybe people will say it is nicely done or they will find mistakes with my weaving. When they tell me that it is very nice then I become very glad."

Mary with her husband and two daughters.

Photographs by Cedric Nunn, Afrapix.



# An Artist Called Mary

Mary won a prize for one of her tapestries. But there is a story that goes with it. Someone asked Mary to design and weave a tapestry about the death of Jesus. When the tapestry was finished, the person who ordered it said he did not want it. So they just decided to enter it into a designing and weaving competition. Mary told us about the design. "It shows Jesus when he was hanging from the cross, and also where he was carrying the cross, and being followed by a lot of people. And there were women

behind him. And it also shows when he was waiting to be sentenced. In this design we had people dressed in Zulu clothes and Jesus was also dressed in Zulu clothes. We wanted to show people that Jesus is not of a particular kind of nation, as we sometimes get this idea from the type of clothes we see him wearing in pictures. Jesus is like everyone of us." We hope that Mary carries on weaving her beautiful tapestries for a long, long time. ●

Mary's tapestry that won the prize. Photo by Princess Ngcobo



1989

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

SPEAK

You can't Kill the spirit  
She is like the mountains  
Old and strong  
She'll go on  
and on  
and on  
You can't Kill the Spirit



1989

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

SPEAK

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Durban  
4001



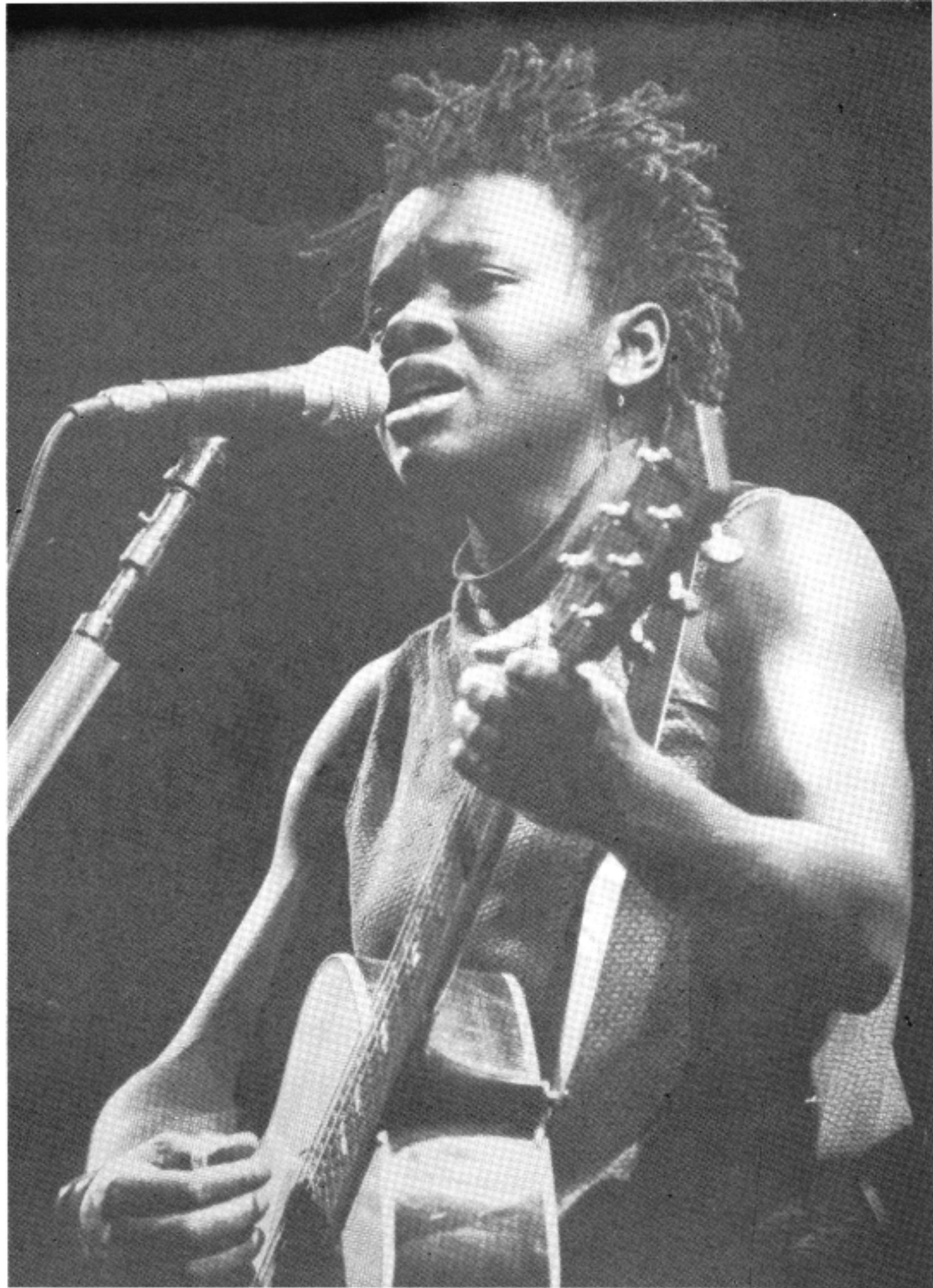
**These are the words from a song written by Tracy Chapman. The song is about a woman who is beaten by her husband.**

*Last night I heard the screaming,  
loud voices behind the wall.  
Another sleepless night for me,  
it won't do no good to call.  
The police always come late,  
if they come at all.*

*Last night I heard the screaming,  
loud voices behind the wall  
Another sleepless night for me,  
it won't do no good to call.  
The police always come late,  
if they come at all.  
And when they arrive,  
they say  
they can't interfere  
with domestic affairs  
between a man and his wife.  
And as they walk out the door  
the tears well up in her eyes.*

*Last night I heard the screaming,  
and a silence that chilled my soul,  
Prayed that I was dreaming  
When I saw the ambulance in the road.  
And the policeman said,  
"I'm here to keep the peace.  
Would the crowd disperse.  
I think we could all use some sleep."*

*Last night I heard the screaming,  
loud voices behind the wall.  
Another sleepless night for me,  
it won't do no good to call.  
The police always come too late,  
if they come at all.*



Tracy Chapman singing at the Human Rights Now Concert in Harare.

Photograph by Sarah-Jane Poole

## Tracy Chapman Sings from the Heart

Everyone is talking about Tracy Chapman. She sang at Nelson Mandela's birthday concert in London in June. And she sang at the Human Rights Now concert in Zimbabwe in October. She has the most wonderful voice. She sings straight from her heart. And her heart is in the right place. For she sings about the lives of poor people. She sings about love. She sings about the problems between black and white people. She sings about a woman who is beaten by her husband. Tracy Chapman is twenty-four

years old. She is from a poor family in United States of America. She knows first hand what black people go through in a country ruled by whites. She knows what it is to be a woman in a world ruled by men. And she sings about all of this. In a very strong and beautiful voice that makes you shiver. We hope that one day soon South Africa will be free, and we will be able to hear Tracy Chapman sing to us all here in South Africa.●



Photograph by Rafs Mayet, Afrapix.

# **A Woman's Place Is In The World**

Women in trade unions do not believe a woman's place is in the home! Women are fighting for their rights as workers, as women, and as parents.

## **An Important Resolution On Women**

The Transport and General Workers' Union has taken a step forward for women's rights. They passed an important resolution on women. The meeting noted that women are oppressed at work, at home and in the community. The union decided to do something about this. They are going to set up structures in the union whereby women workers will meet to discuss their problem at work and how they can overcome them. These meetings will happen at a local, regional and national level. The union decided to campaign against women's oppression. Already two women's forums at a local level have been set up. The one is Johannesburg, and the other in Cape Town. So things are really on the move in Transport and General Workers Union.

## **A Victory for Women and Parents**

The Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union has won a victory for women and for parents. The union signed the first "Parental Rights Agreement" in South Africa in August 1988. This was signed with bosses at Pick 'n Pay.

"Maternity Rights" agreements have been signed before with bosses. These agreements have won the right for women workers to take care of their babies in companies where workers have won maternity agreements women workers have been able to fall pregnant without fear of losing their job.

## **Fathers Are Parents Too**

The Parental Rights Agreement gives women workers all the rights of a maternity agreement and much more. The agreement recognises that fathers are also parents.

Fathers can also get time off when their baby is born. And both parents can get leave to take care of their sick children up to 12 years of age. So this new agreement does two new things. Fathers are seen as parents. And workers can take better care of their children without fear of losing their job.

## **Equality In The Home**

The agreement is a step closer to equality between men and women in the home. This is because the agreement allows mothers and fathers to share the job of childcare. The

union says that it is important that fathers get a chance to be with their young children. And that it is not just the women's responsibility to care for children. The union says that it is not right that women have to work two shifts at the job and at home. And that it is not right that women are sometimes seen as "baby machines" who must stay at home. They say that fathers have a right to share in child care.

### **Leave To Care for Babies**

With this agreement fathers get up to 8 days paid leave after the baby is born or when a baby is adopted. Fathers get 18 days unpaid leave and a paid day off a month for six months to take the baby to the clinic. Fathers can take this leave and play a real part in the care of the babies.

Mothers can take 11 months parental leave. Nine of these are paid at 75% of the wages. The other two months are unpaid. If both parents work for Pick 'n Pay this leave can be shared by the parents. Mothers get paid leave for checkups at the clinics. If a woman has a stillborn baby or a miscarriage she can take paid leave off to recover her health. So whatever happens in her pregnancy a woman can take leave to recover properly.

### **Leave For Sick Children**

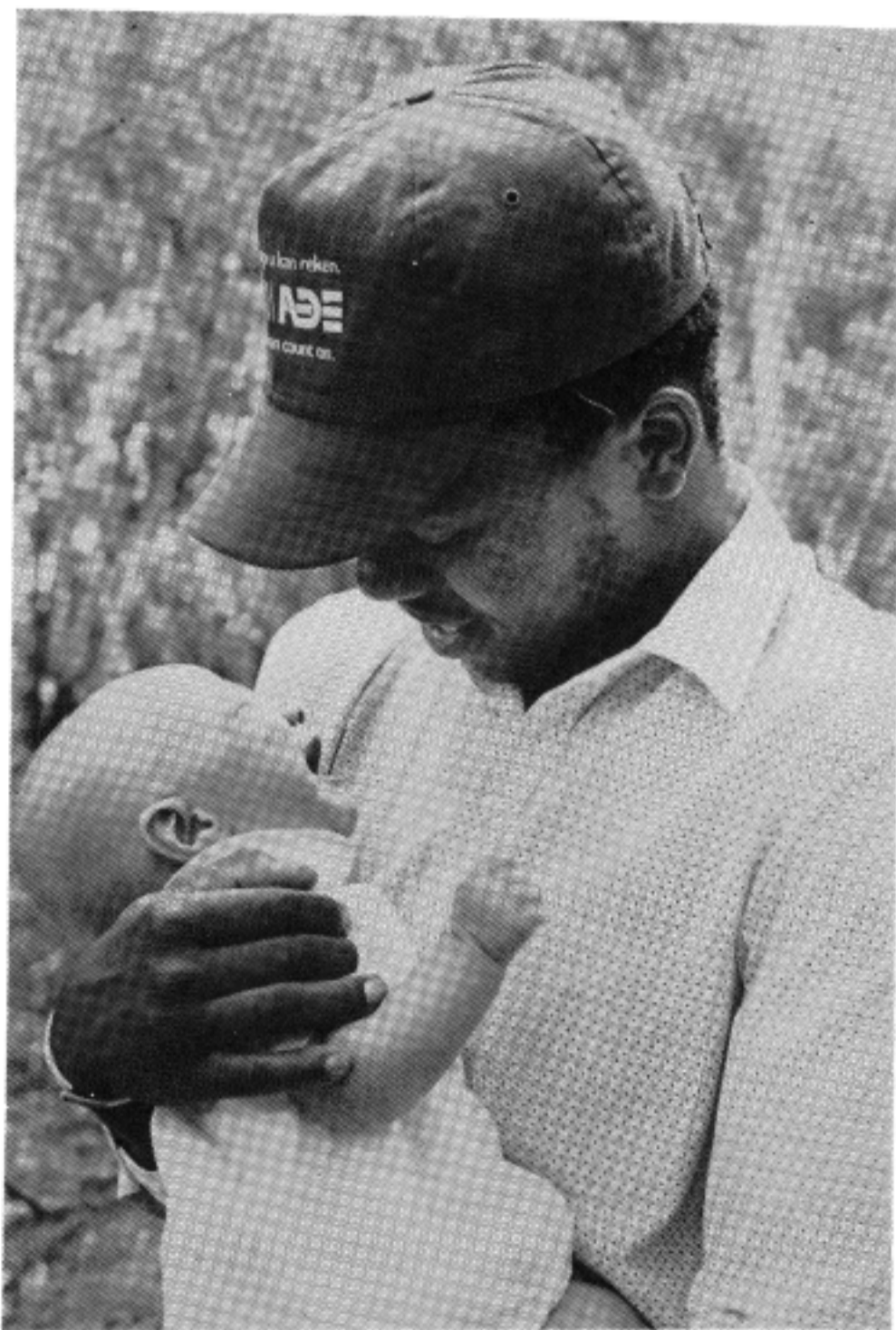
The union says that workers have a right to a hold a job and also to give their children attention that all children need. So they have seen to it that the agreement allows fathers and mothers to take unpaid leave to care for sick children. With this agreement parents do not have to fear losing their jobs as a result of pregnancy and sick children. And a worker's service is not broken by taking such leave.

### **New Ideas**

A lot of the ideas behind this agreement are new ideas. Many people believe that it is a woman's job to care for small babies and sick children. Many men have never done such things in their life. A man with a small baby in the clinic queue is a strange sight. It is a sight hardly ever seen. Men are not used to caring for children. Will they start doing this now that there is such an agreement at Pick 'n Pay? Some women workers say it will be hard to find a man who will take care of children. They say men will take the leave given by this agreement but that they will use it for their own pleasure. Like going out drinking.

Because they will think it is a woman's place to care for children. It is never easy to change old ideas. Mothers and fathers will have to talk about these things and will have to work together to change their ideas about themselves and about women. The agreement is an important victory because it allows Pick 'n Pay workers who are parents to take better care of their children than before. And because it brings new ideas about a woman's place.

There are still many companies where women workers still get fired when they fall pregnant. We hope that the victory of Pick 'n Pay workers will spread so that workers else where can fight for the rights of women and of parents. And so that the new ideas about fathers playing a part in caring for children can become a real thing that we see happening.●



Looking after a friend

Photograph by Gill de Vlieg, Afrapix



"I have lost my child that I loved so much, but I know that she died for all the peace-loving people of this country."

Photograph by SPEAK Collective

Zizile with her grandchildren Lunga and Noluthando

# A FIGHTING LIFE

In a house in Lamontville township, a woman sits at her kitchen table. It is dark and cool outside. There is the sound of buses and taxis. People are arriving home from work. The woman has lots of silver hair. She has a strong face, but she looks tired and sad. Her name is Zizile. Not so long ago she had three daughters. Now she has only two. She shows us photographs of her daughter Nontsikelelo.

She is proud of Ntsiki, as the family calls her. There is a photo of Ntsiki with her baby son, Lunga. We look at the photographs. They make us feel sad. Ntsiki looks so young in the photographs. We watch Lunga, Ntsiki's baby son. He is running in and out of the room.

Zizile Cothoza is the mother of Nontsikelelo, who was killed by police in June 1988. Ntsiki

was killed together with seven other young people at the Swaziland border. Police said they killed them because they were members of the African National Congress.

SPEAK has come to talk to Zizile about her daughter's short life. And Zizile wants to tell her story to the whole world. "Ntsiki was my second child. She was born in June 1967 at King Edward Hospital. She went to school here at Lamontville and was a brilliant child," said Zizile.

### **Ntsiki's Fight for Better Conditions at School**

Ntsiki went to school at Lamontville High. This was in 1983 when students all over the country were making demands for better education. Among other things, they wanted the South African Defence Force out of the townships and their schools. They also wanted Student Representative Councils so that they could have a say in the running of the schools. In all, they wanted schools to be better places to learn. Lamontville was one of the first schools to be occupied by the army. The army would throw teargas and sjambok students each time they tried to meet to discuss their problems. Zizile said, "When Ntsiki was doing standard eight, I received a letter from her school. The teacher was complaining about Ntsiki, saying that she is among students who are causing problems at school. I asked Ntsiki what problems she is causing. She said that students want the school to be a better place to learn. The school building was old and they wanted it repaired. There were not enough teachers.

They also found it very hard to learn in the presence of the police and SADF. Ntsiki told me no one would listen to the students' problems. Instead teachers and inspectors said the students were causing problems. During those days things were very bad at Lamontville High School. I remember one day Ntsiki and her classmates were chased out of classrooms by police. They were forced to jump through the windows from a high building. Ntsiki was lucky not to be injured. But one of her friends was injured badly and will never walk again".

During the problems at Ntsiki's school some of the good teachers were transferred to other schools. There were many students and only a few teachers. Students took up the matter and demanded that the teachers be brought back. The Lamontville Education Crisis Committee was formed by parents and students to deal with problems at school. But no one listened. Zizile supported her daughter. She could see that the students were right in wanting changes.

"I remember the principal of Ntsiki's school coming to me one day. He said, 'Your daughter is very brilliant. I don't know why she is so wild.' I said to him, 'I don't think she is wild. She tells me that they want better education. I think you people must listen to what students are complaining about.' That year many students were fighting hard in most schools to improve things. Ntsiki managed to pass standard eight, I don't know how."



The photograph of Ntsiki made us feel very sad.

Photograph by SPEAK Collective.



Ntsiki's family and friends some years ago. Zizile is holding Ntsiki's child, Lunga. Ntsiki is standing second from the right. Photograph by SPEAK Collective.

### Lunga, Ntsiki's Son

"Ntsiki was doing standard nine when she fell pregnant. Nobody realised that she was pregnant. She continued at school until she had her baby. She loved her son very much. I had to accept the situation and let her go back to school. She had to come back from school and breast feed her baby. She loved him very much.

### Ntsiki Becomes Unhappy

"Ntsiki was becoming very unhappy with her school life in South Africa I remember her saying, 'I don't think I am going to stay in South Africa under these conditions. There is no proper learning at school. We run away from police all the time. No one listens to our demands. I don't think I am going to stay here.' I did not take her seriously. I thought she was only joking. I was sure she could not leave her son Lunga behind. She loved him very much. She spoke of a new South Africa that she dreamt of, and she spoke of her frustration here. She also spoke of the need to fight in order to change things in this country. I feared for her life. But she taught me to be strong and brave. She said, "Ma,

whose child do you want to have die for the struggles of this country? Be brave and expect that your child will die one day."

### Struggles For a Better Life in Lamontville

Like in many townships, people in Lamontville have been involved in many struggles to make Lamontville a better place to live. Nontsikelelo was a member of Lamontville Youth Organisation. The youth and parents were fighting together for better living conditions. And for better learning conditions at their schools. All these struggles met a lot of resistance from the government. Many people were detained and many left this country to join organisations that fight to change things in South Africa.

Ntsiki was being harassed by police. She hid from police, taking her 9 months old baby Lunga with her on her back. But she and her baby were found and were detained for three weeks.

### Ntsiki Leaves

"A few months later Ntsiki disappeared from home. I had no idea where she was. One night the police came home. They asked me

where Ntsiki was. I had a big quarrel with them because they said that I knew where my daughter was. Meantime Ntsiki had been detained again. So they actually knew where she was. She was detained for three months. I was not allowed to see her. My daughter was later released. The police told me that Ntsiki was caught trying to leave the country unlawfully. They told me that next time she will be shot and killed if she tries to go away."

### **Back to School**

"Ntsiki was released and went back to school. There were problems again. The school was closed. Ntsiki was harassed by police all the time. Police came home looking for her several times. She slept away from home. I remember one day they missed her by seconds. She had been home to check how we were. She hated the life of running away all the time. She spoke of going away again. She said she will take Lunga and go away. I told her never to take Lunga with. I was worried. I just could not lose both of them."

### **Ntsiki Leaves Again.**

"Ntsiki disappeared again. This time her son Lunga was three years old and he realised that his mother is not home. He spent four months crying for her. He went to creche, but he would run out of the gates following anyone who looked like Ntsiki. My heart was sore. I did everything to make Lunga happy, but he was missing his mom. I knew that Ntsiki was missing him too."

"Ntsiki wrote to say that she was safe. She said she was at school. But most of all she wanted to know how Lunga is. She told me not to worry she will continue at school. I have always wanted her to be educated and be something in life."

### **Ntsiki is Killed**

"On 8 June this year I saw on T.V. that young people were killed at the Swaziland border near Piet Retief. I felt bad because people had been killed. I never thought one of those people could be my child. I saw the kombi they were said to have been in. It looked badly damaged. More than a week later, early on a Sunday morning, somebody phoned. I did not know who the caller was. The strange voice just said I must go and check at Piet Retief, my daughter may be there."

### **A Visit from the Police**

"Police came at midnight one night to show me photographs of my daughter dead. I did not cry. I would not cry in front of them because that is what they wanted. I was very angry about being woken up only to be shown photographs of my child dead. I was angry about the idea of her having been killed. Why was she not arrested and tried in court if she did wrong?" Many people were asking the same question about the killing.

### **A Long Silent Journey**

"I went to see the lawyers. The lawyers helped me, together with other parents, to find our way to see the bodies of our children. Zizile spoke of a long silent journey from Durban to Piet Retief to identify her child's body. Zizile went there together with other parents. They were taken to a room where the bodies were. Zizile said, "There was a terrible smell. We saw our children put together. Some were put one on top of the other. Ntsiki's body was badly damaged. I could hardly recognise her. I was upset, but mostly I was very angry. They had killed our children. Why were we not told in time that our children's bodies were there? We also went to see the kombi they were in. It was hard to tell how they were really killed. We saw the bullet holes on the kombi. We came back to prepare for funerals."

### **Lunga Still Misses His Mother**

All Zizile had told Lunga was that his mother was killed in an accident. She thought he was too young to understand. But Zizile got a big surprise recently. Lunga saw police. He stood and appeared very angry. Lunga told his grandmother that he hates police because they killed his mother. He is only four, but he knows what it means to hate.

### **A Strong Woman**

Zizile is a strong woman. She says Nontsikelelo also helped her to be even stronger. She said, "I have lost my child that I loved so much. But I know that she died for all the peace loving people of this country. I am proud of her. To all the mothers who are losing their children every day, be strong. Be ready for it. Listen to your children when they tell you about their frustrations. Support them in their struggles for justice." ●

# I AM PREGNANT

## What Will Labour Be Like?

### How will you know when your labour starts?

What if the pain gets too strong? How do you know what stage of labour you are in? There are so many questions and worries that a woman who is going into labour has. So if you also have questions and worries you are very normal! In this issue of SPEAK we are going to try to explain what happens to a woman in labour.

There are 3 main stages of labour. Different things happen to your body in the different stages.

### What Happens in the First Stage of Labour?

In the last month of your pregnancy you may feel your womb (uterus) going hard for a few seconds. These are called contractions, but they are not too painful. Your womb is just getting ready for labour. There are a number of things that can tell you that your labour has started. Your waters may break just before labour starts. Or your waters may break a bit later. What are your waters? There is a bag of waters that surrounds the baby inside the womb. It is like a balloon. When the bag of fluid breaks, the fluid inside rushes out from your vagina like a little river. You may also have a "show". If you have a "show" you will notice some sticky blood on your pants. This will mean that your labour has started. But many women know that they are in labour because of contractions.

When labour starts your womb contracts and relaxes. The womb is a large bag of muscle. When it contracts the bag gets

smaller. These contractions pull your uterus up and make it feel very hard and tight. When your womb relaxes the bag gets larger and feels soft again. But with each contraction the cervix, which is the opening to your womb, starts to open up. When labour really starts, you feel these contractions getting stronger and more regular than before. Contractions start gently, get stronger and then gently go away. Contractions usually come regularly, with a few minutes between each contraction. When these kind of contractions start you are in the first stage of labour.

**Labor pains are caused by contractions or tightening of the womb.**

**Between contractions the womb is relaxed like this:**



**During contractions, the womb tightens and lifts up like this:**



**The contractions cause the *cervix* or 'door of the womb' to open—a little more each time.**

When your labour starts you don't need to go to the hospital straight away. Sometimes the first stage of labour takes hours. But if it is going to take you a long time to get to the



hospital, it is better to start your journey in time. But if you can get to the hospital quickly you should go when your contractions are starting to feel strong and are between 5 and 10 minutes apart. But as soon as your waters break you should go to hospital. It is very easy to get an infection when your waters are broken. When you get to hospital you will be examined. The midwife or doctor will check to see how far your labour is. To do this she will examine you in your vagina. She can tell how far your labour is by feeling the size of the opening to your womb. She will check your blood pressure and listen to the babies heart beat. Sometimes you will get an enema to clean out your backpassage. The midwife will usually shave your pubic hair. Some doctors think it is good to shave the hair. Some doctors say that it is okay to leave the hair and not shave it. In some hospitals you can say which you would like to have done.

### **What Will Labour Be Like?**

To begin with the contractions are not painful, but may be a bit uncomfortable. Later in the first stage of labour, the contractions get painful and then come closer together, with say 5 minutes between each one. Women often find it helps to breathe away the painful part of the contraction.

You should try to relax completely between these contractions. You can do this by breathing deeply when the pain is bad. Try to think about your breathing and not the pain.

It is during the first stage of labour that the waters often burst. This may happen early in the labour, or may happen when the contractions get stronger. The labour may go more quickly after the waters have burst. Sometimes the midwife will break your waters to speed up your labour. This first stage of labour lasts 6 - 12 hours.

The hardest part of your labour comes next. It is the time when the cervix completely opens up. And the womb is getting ready to push the baby out. This part is called transition. It is the shortest part of labour, lasting between a few minutes to an hour.

The contractions can be very strong. Some women feel sick and vomit. Some feel shaky and get cramps or a bad backache. Other women want to cry and shout out loud and it is the time when you may lose control. It is important to remember to breathe away the pain, or to change your position if you want to. Sometimes sitting up, standing, or moving about can help a bit.

### **The Second Stage of Labour**

In the second stage of labour you feel a bit better now that the transition is over. Slowly and then strongly you want to start to push with your contractions. Your womb is pushing the baby slowly out through your vagina. To "push" well you should take a deep breath and push hard with your stomach as if you were going to the toilet. Sometimes changing your position can help.

Sometimes women feel like pushing before the cervix is properly open. The doctor or midwife will tell you not to push. Try to breathe slowly and not push. You may feel better if you change your position or lie on your side not your back.

This pushing stage usually lasts half an hour to 2 hours. At the end the baby's head slowly stretches the skin outside your vagina and then pushes out from the vagina. When this happens, the midwife or doctor will tell you to stop pushing and to pant or breathe fast. They deliver the head slowly so that the baby is not injured, and the skin around your vagina is not torn. The baby's head usually comes out first, and her face is looking down at the floor. Then the head turns to one side. The shoulders are gently delivered one at a time. The rest of the baby comes sliding easily out.

Sometimes the skin outside the vagina is tight and doesn't stretch properly. The vagina can tear. To stop a tear, the doctor might cut your vagina. This is called an episiotomy. Many women get episiotomies. Sometimes they don't need them, but doctors and midwives feel it is easier to stitch a cut than a tear.

The baby is wet, sometimes with a white milky covering, and sometimes with a little blood on it. The head may be a strange shape at first, but the shape looks normal a

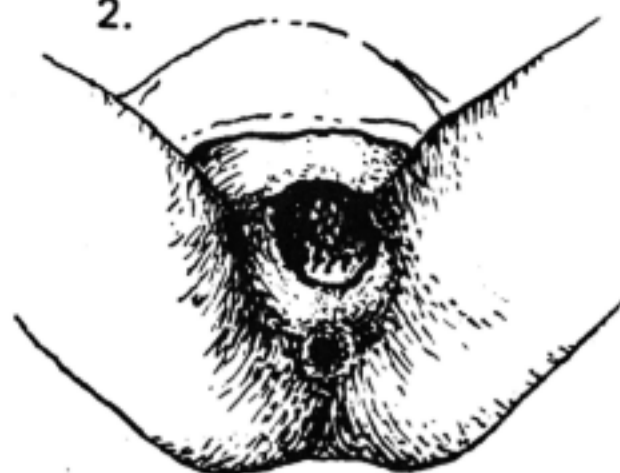
Normally the baby is born head first like this:

1.



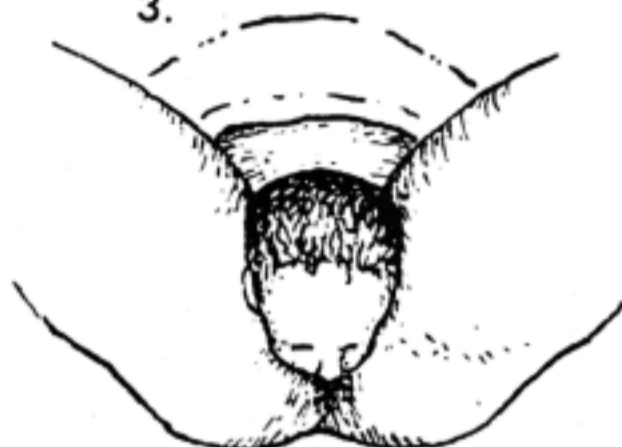
Now push hard.

2.



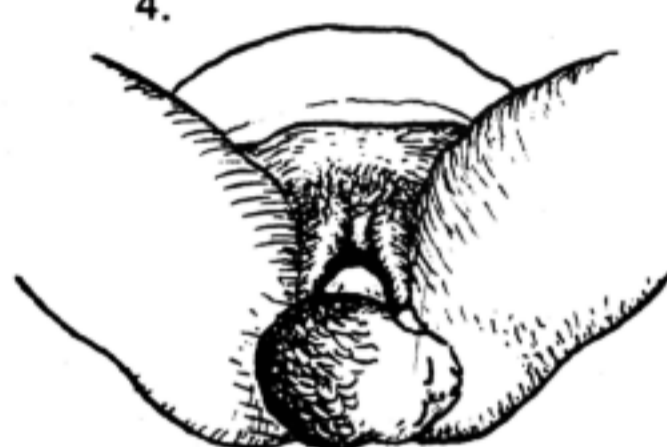
Now try not to push hard. Take many short, fast breaths. This helps prevent tearing the opening (see p. 269).

3.



The head usually comes out face down.

4.



Then the baby's body turns to one side so the shoulders can come out.

few days after birth. The umbilical cord joins the baby to the afterbirth (placenta) that is still inside you. This cord is clamped and then cut. The baby is now a separate person who is breathing for herself.

Ask the midwife to help you hold your baby as soon as she is born. Try putting her to your breast straight away. This is the start of your relationship with your newborn child.

### The Third Stage of Labour

The third stage of labour is the delivery of the afterbirth. This happens a few minutes after the baby is born. The midwife gently pulls on the umbilical cord and the afterbirth separates from the wall of the womb. It slips out of the vagina sometimes with a rush of blood. The labour is now over.

### Is It Better to Lie Down or to Stand Up When You Have Your Baby?

There is no one right way for you to have your baby. Some women like to lie on their backs. Others may want to kneel, stand or squat. For hundreds of years women chose

to deliver their babies in many different ways.

In many clinics and hospitals today women are made to lie on their backs when they are in labour. If this is not comfortable for you, tell the midwife or doctor. Try out different positions until you find the best one for you. You may have to fight with the doctors or nurses to let you do this. If you have a friend or your husband with you, get them to fight for you. They can also hold you in the different positions.

squatting,



sitting propped up,



### What Can Help With the Pain During Labour?

In the last month's SPEAK we talked about some of the things you can do for yourself to help with the pain. Breathing exercises and relaxation exercises are both very

important. Changing positions to make yourself more comfortable may help. Having a friend with you to comfort and support you stops you getting frightened by the pain. But if you do get a lot of pain there are special medicines that the doctors can give you to take the pain away. You can breathe gas and air, or have an injection.

### *Breathing Gas and Air*

In some hospitals, women are given special gas to breathe when their contractions are strong. For many women it takes the pain away. The gas does not harm the baby.

### *Pain Killing Injections*

The one drug given to women for pain is called pethidine. It is very strong and takes the pain away for an hour or two. It can help if a woman is having a long first stage of labour and is getting tired or upset. But if it is given later in the labour, two bad things can happen. The woman becomes sleepy and loses control of her labour. The baby can also be born very sleepy and may not breathe well. So be careful before you let the doctor give you a pethidine injection. Ask if you really need to have it.

### *Epidural Anaesthetic*

This is a special pain killing injection that a doctor puts into your back. It may be difficult to get the injection in the right place. So the doctor may take a long time to put the injection in. The injection stops you feeling the pain of contractions. It may also stop you having the feeling to push the baby out. Then the doctor has to use forceps to pull the baby out. But for women who have complications or who have a long, painful first stage an epidural is a good thing to have. If the doctor wants to give you an epidural make sure you know why.

### **How Will the Midwife Know if Your Labour is Going Well?**

While you are in labour the midwife looking after you needs to know three things. She must know if you are all right. She must know if the labour is all right. And she must know if your baby is all right. She knows how you are by taking your blood pressure every few hours. She knows how your labour is going by examining inside your

vagina every few hours. She makes sure that the opening of your womb is getting larger as the labour continues. If the labour is not getting on as quickly as it should the midwife may put a drip into your vein. The medicine in the drip makes your womb contract again, and makes the labour go faster.

The midwife listens to the baby's heart with a special stethoscope. She sees how fast it is going after you have a contraction. If your baby's heart is going too fast or too slow you may need an operation to get the baby out quickly. In some big hospitals they watch the baby's heart by putting a strap around your stomach. The strap records the baby's heart rate on a big machine next to your bed. Do not be frightened by this. It is only another way of checking that your baby is well during labour.



**Remember, most labours are normal, and most babies are born normally. So try not to be frightened by your labour. There is nothing better than holding your new baby after she is born. Congratulations, you've done it! ●**