

SPEAK

JULY 1992
No. 41

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FEMINISM
IS IT A DIRTY WORD?

RAPE

**AT THE POINT OF AN
ARMY GUN**

PLUS

**HOW TO GET AN ID BOOK
HOW TOBACCO KILLS**

**SHADO
TWALA**

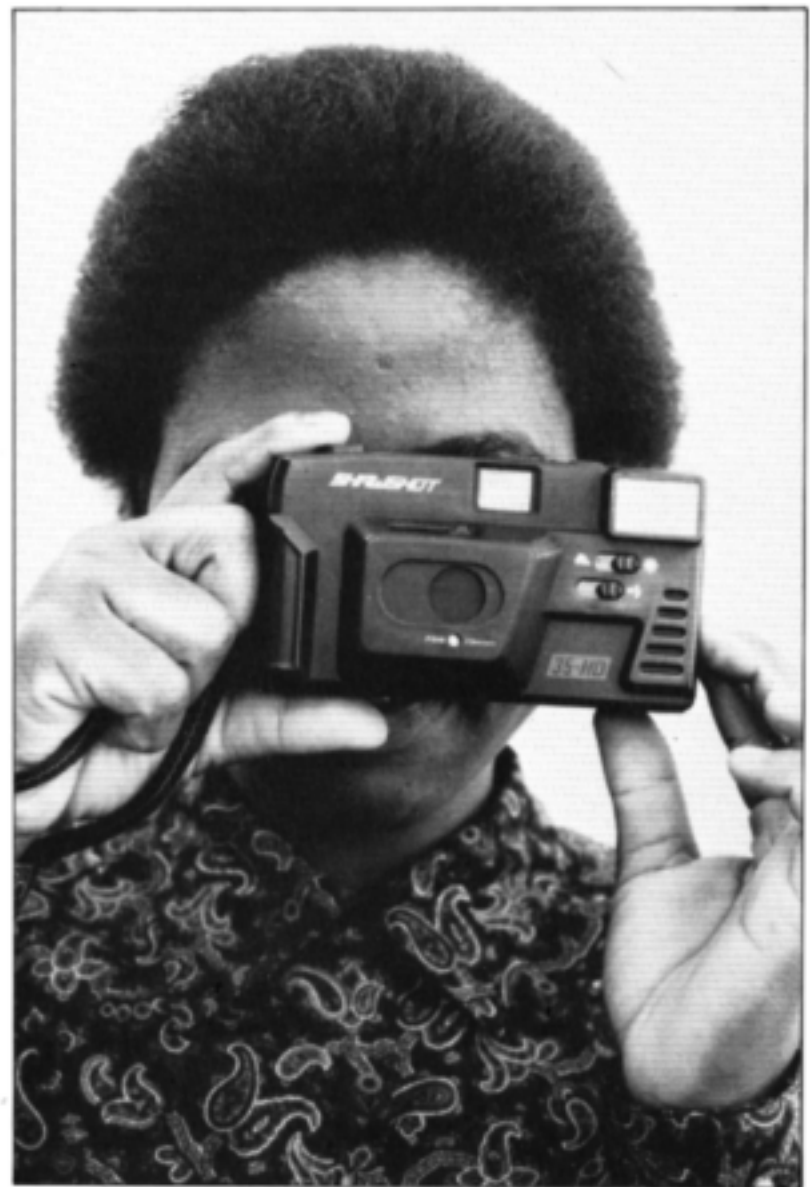
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A million thanks to Shamim Meer for all she has done during her ten years with SPEAK. We wish her well for her studies in the USA.

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COMMENT

Once again, we bring you a magazine bursting with interviews, information, advice and more.

We introduce you to Nomshado Twala, whose voice is known to thousands of South Africans who have listened to her jazz and talk shows for many years. She tells of her life challenges and views.

A reader writes angrily about the silence around policy making on abortion. For how long are we going to sit with men making decisions about women's bodies and their reproductive rights?

Feminism has long been a dirty word in South Africa. Very often strong, militant women who demand rights for women are quick to say 'but I am not a feminist.' In this issue we hear the voices of women who say 'Yes, I am a feminist!' Who are these women? What does feminism mean to them?

Children are demanding their rights. This came out strongly at the recent first-ever children's summit held in Cape Town recently. Their demands are a challenge to both today's government and tomorrow's. Read about the Children's Charter in this issue of SPEAK.

We've got information on the health hazards of smoking - many of which people do not know.

Be careful when you go job-hunting, things are not always as above-board as they seem. Read about this as well as how to get an ID.

Don't forget to make your views heard through SPEAK - our address is on the letter's page - so put pen to paper without delay. ☉

Talk back

Abortion must be legalised

I am very concerned about women's rights in the new South Africa. There are still many battles to be won before women are liberated.

Policy documents are being written. People are talking of a charter for women's rights and a Bill of Rights for all. But people are silent on one crucial issue - abortion.

Two to three hundred thousand women every year seek backstreet abortions at great risk to their lives, health and fertility. We cannot turn our backs on these women.

But, as always, everyone else's rights are being considered above those of women. People say abortion is too sensitive, it will offend people. But what about the women who die every year from septic abortions? Who is defending their rights?

Women fall pregnant because they do not have access to contraception, because contraception fails, because their partners demand sex and do not allow women to refuse. They fall pregnant because they have been denied education and do not know how their bodies work. Very often these women have no

money and cannot afford another child. Their only solution is abortion.

As women we need to say "this is enough". Enough women have died. Give us the right to choose.

*Concerned woman
Johannesburg*

History ignores women

Congratulations on making SPEAK available and frequent. We welcome the chance to speak as women. Not that we have ever been silent, but history has deliberately ignored us and kept no records of our words - pretending we never existed! This lie must be challenged. We thus gladly welcome the chance to speak, to break the silence and to restore herstory to women.

I have written a poem to try to educate women who are against women's liberation movements as they think they contradict the bible, our culture and the law. Most women fail to grasp these were all products of men designed to make women inferior in the name of God and culture. Women must challenge this.

Hear not
When they say you are a
lesser being

When they say you were
created for a male
When they say you were
created from a male
Hear not, you did not write
that book

Hear not
When they say it's culture
When they say it's our
traditions
When they say it's our roots
You did not participate in their
definition

Hear not
When they say it's the law
When they say it's legal
When they say it's justice
Hear not, you did not
formulate those laws

*Torontle Mositi
Gaborone, Botswana*

Congratulations!

I want to congratulate you on
your first monthly issue of
SPEAK in May as well as for
your ten years of existence.
During these years you have
made us cry, laugh, sad and
happy.
You have carried the struggles
of the down-trodden, abused
and oppressed people of this
country. Through your hard
work, we see ourselves as
people and wonder how we can
become a better society.
In the May issue I enjoyed all
the articles - particularly those
on Mthuthuzeli Tom, Nothembi
Mkhwebane and the violence in
Alexandra. I cannot wait for the
next issue!

*Voder Nqatyelwa
Soweto*

Write to SPEAK

**Thanks to all 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,
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Johannesburg
South Africa**

Hostels are a tragedy

I am prompted by the article in
SPEAK on an Alexandra
women's hostel to raise an issue
of great tragedy - the men's
hostels.

Hostels have become a sore
point to us township residents.
How can people like Gatsha

Buthlezi oppose hostels
being converted into
family units? They claim
to be fighting for
liberation, yet they are
happy to have people
living under such
despicable conditions.
Hostels are designed to
strip a man of all dignity
and self respect - to break
him and dump him on the
scrap heaps called
homelands.

Many of these hostel
dwellers are honest
hardworking men who
want to live a straight life
and support their families.
Instead they are being co-
opted to attack township
residents with whom they
have lived in peace for
many decades.

The sooner these hostels
disappear in their present
form the better. As they
are now, they are a danger.

*Desmond Missouw
Soweto*



Here's a quote from "Numeracy Book: Teacher's Guide" produced by *Learn and Teach Adult Literacy Organisation*:

"To count is not a new thing. People have been counting since the beginning of this World. Our forefathers knew how to count their cows, sheep, goat, bags of their harvests and they could even count their wives and children." Unfortunately they do not mention what our foremothers knew to count.

* * * * *

Benny Alexander, general secretary of the PAC, has been in the news lately. The bad news for gays is that, in an interview with *Work in Progress*, Alexander said he believes homosexuality is "un-African".



Kwa-Sophie...

The same week, Porchia Scholtz, mother of three children to Alexander who lives apart from him and in poverty, said of Alexander in a weekly newspaper: "He said he would never marry me, because I do not have the education a good wife needs." Makes you think, doesn't it?

* * * * *

We all know Codesa is male-dominated, but we think the Citizen newspaper went too far the other day when they wrote about "the ANC's Mr Frene Ginwala." As far as we know **she** is the co-ordinator of the Women's National Coalition.

* * * * *

Quote of the month:
"People from their days of birth shall be equal here on earth. Women shall have their separate lives, Instead of being just moms and wives."
 Verse from a song called 'Sisterhood' ☉

South African
LABOUR BULLETIN

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

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SHADO



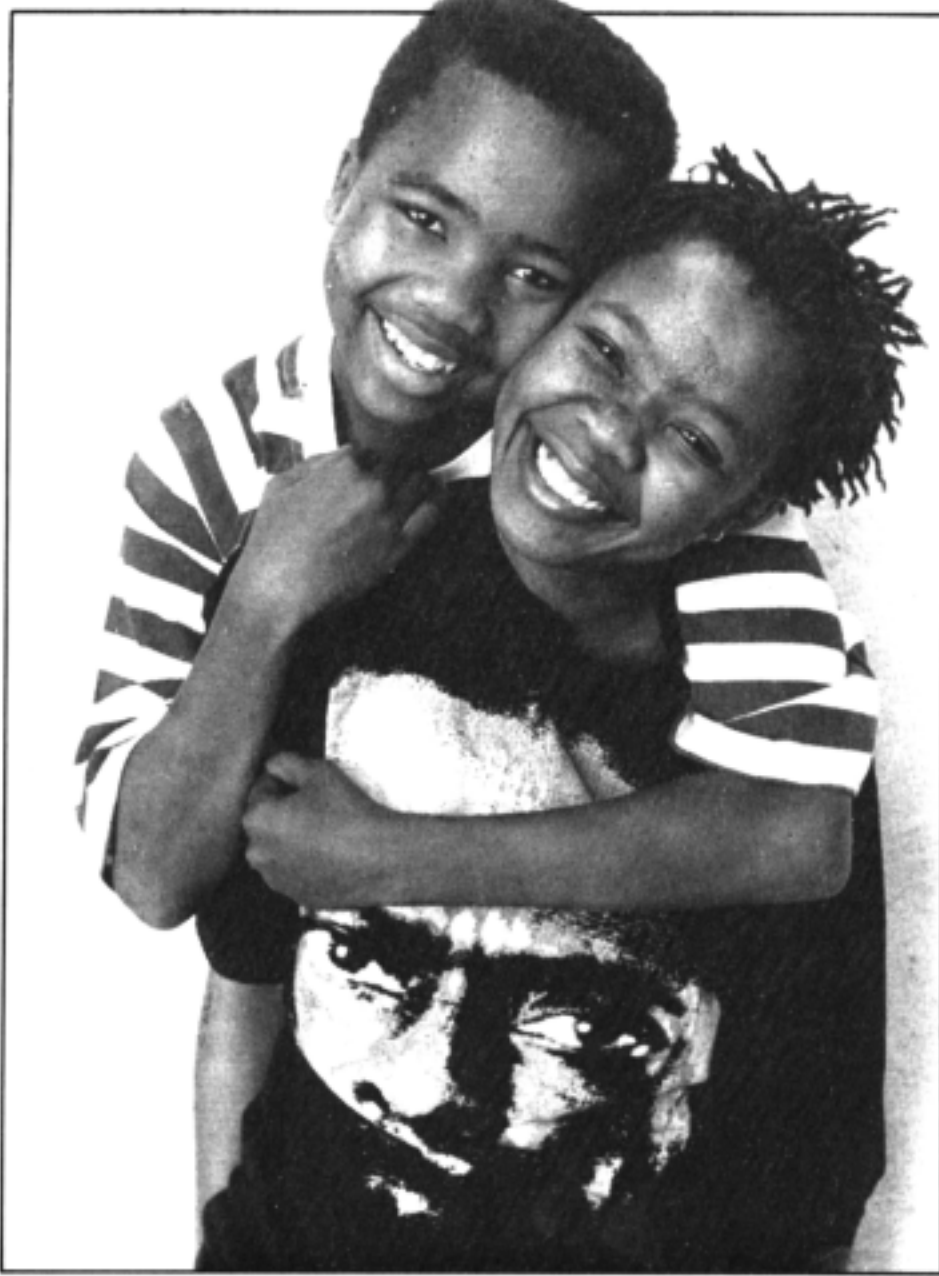
Who is the real Shado Twala? Thoraya Pandy went to find out about the person behind the voice. Photos by Anna Zieminski

Nomshado Twala knows what she wants in life and how to get it.

Among other things, she is a talk show host for Radio 702 (an independent radio station broadcasting to Johannesburg), has her own jazz programme, edits a jazz journal and is a single parent.

"I have very little time for myself but the things I do make me happy because I like doing them," she told SPEAK. "I also get very worried if I'm not busy."

She says she has loved radio since she was a teenager.



Shado with her best friend - her son Vusi

"I've always been fascinated by the way journalists look and the risks they take. My mind was made up, I wanted to be that professional who amused people and kept them interested."

Twala was born in Johannesburg and went to boarding school in Swaziland. While still at school, she started working on Radio Swazi as an announcer.

"Swaziland was great, I went to a multi-racial school and learnt to be tolerant of others," she said.

She left school after finishing her O-levels (the same as matric in SA) after falling pregnant.

"I decided not to go back to school because I wanted to be there for my son. My parents, like any other parents, could have killed me, but I made my decision," said Twala.

"I've learnt to survive without the formal education, although there were difficulties - like having to prove to people you can do something without having degrees behind your name."

Twala certainly has survived.

After school she worked for Bop radio and TV as a news reader. She moved to Johannesburg,

and was offered a job on SABC's Radio Metro as an announcer after the station manager heard about her from a friend. At first she refused the offer, but friends encouraged her.

"I hated the controls at SABC. We really had to report false news."

She decided to move over to Radio 702.

Despite her experience, Twala still gets nervous.

"It is difficult to be a talk-show host. Everyday I get the jitters when I switch on the microphone. I believe I have a different audience every night who must be kept interested."

It isn't always easy.

"I remember when one of the listeners called into the station asking me why I - a black person - was hosting one of 'their' shows.

"I calmly told her she had the right to her opinion and could raise the problem with the station manager. She was so stunned when I spoke so nicely she just put the phone down.

"I've dealt with other situations in the same way and have found being tolerant of people is the best solution."

SPEAK asked if she had any problems hosting a programme called Sexually Speaking - where



Shado Twala: "Learn to accept yourself"

she talks openly about sexual problems.

"I wish callers would be more open about sex. In many communities sex is not spoken about. Everyone looks the other way when you go into detail on the subject. How can you expect people to understand AIDS when they don't want to be open about sex?" she asked. Twala feels strongly about AIDS and has appeared in adverts on AIDS.

"AIDS is breaking up families, communities and world unity. It is time we stop being conservative and begin to talk openly about it.

"I believe AIDS is going to teach us to be humans again. You can't buy AIDS away with all the money in the world.

"I have a lot of gay friends. When I heard about AIDS for the first time, I said to myself - this confirms homosexuality is wrong. But I learnt that AIDS affects everyone, no matter who you are or where you come from.

"We must learn to accept and respect what people are and not point the blame around. Let's put our heads together and try to solve it together," she urged.

Twala's son is now 15 - and she says he is her best friend.

"We have a very open relationship and talk to each other about almost anything. If he has something on his mind, he will talk to me and the same goes for me," she said. "I have a very happy family life and would not trade it for anything!"

She also would not give up her radio work.

"I'm happy I'm doing it, there's no better way to grow in life than having the chance to talk to people and hear them calling back and responding."

Twala is a jazz fanatic and her one regret is she has never played an instrument.

"I'm crazy about jazz. I spend most of my free time listening to jazz. I never tire of it," she said.

Her message to SPEAK readers is clear.

"You need to strive to be the best at whatever you do and learn to accept yourself.

"You can spend the rest of your life feeling guilty because you are not what people want you to be. But why waste time, learn to become your own best friend. It will make you a happier person!" ❖



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Fill in the form below and you could be the lucky winner of this cassette player.

Where did Shado Twala go to school?

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Nokuthula

A place of peace

Nokuthula's school for mentally handicapped children in Alex lives up to its name. Bobby Rodwell went to visit the school

For the 120 children who go to school at Nokuthula, it is indeed a place of peace - and joy! When you walk into the school there is a buzz of activity. Children are learning to sew, do woodwork, gardening, artwork, music and drama. The school is brightly painted and filled with the wonderful things made by the children.

If it were not for Nokuthula, these children would be at home without the special care handicapped children need. There are very few schools like Nokuthula in South Africa because the government

provides very little special care for mentally handicapped children.

"Mentally handicapped children are children who are not able to learn certain things

Every person is important, gifted and unique in their own special way

and who learn differently from other children of the same age," said Connie Mngomezulu, the

principal of Nokuthula. "Some children are handicapped from birth, others become handicapped through illness or injuries. Some handicapped children can hardly learn anything, while others are able to learn many skills.

"Mentally handicapped children have a right to have a chance to learn as much as they are able. I am a great believer that every person is important, gifted and unique in their own special way", Connie told us. "Nokuthula aims to empower each person to take control of her/his life as much as she/he is able. All of the people at the

school work together with the children to make the world a better place for them. I believe, given a fair and just chance, they can rise and take up their rightful place in society.

“Many people are responsible for Nokuthula coming to life in February 1984. Many, many people helped to make the school what it is today, it really was a collective effort,” she told SPEAK.

SPEAK wanted to know how Connie got involved with Nokuthula.

“When I was working in the children’s section at the Alexandra Clinic in the 1970’s I learnt to see a patient not just as a sick person but as a whole being with a home and a life.

“**T**hrough Dr Joan Wagner, with whom I worked, I became interested in helping the mentally handicapped. When we found children who were mentally handicapped we had to send them home knowing there was no school or place of care for them. We met their parents and became more worried about their problems. These children were not simply patients, but people whose needs were not being met!

“When a committee was formed of people from the clinic, the township and a toy library, there was a sense of determination to open a school for the mentally handicapped children of Alexandra. We had

all felt the heartbreak at not being able to help these children develop their potential.

“We had skills as a group - we needed land and money,” she said. “We were given support by the Alex Clinic. They gave us the land we are still on. Do you know what we pay today? R1.00 per year! We are very grateful to them.

“Then we borrowed a fund-raising number from the

National Council of Mental Health. We started a “buy a brick” campaign. People in the community bought a brick for 50c - youth and parents alike.

“By 1984 we had not yet raised enough money, but we believed we should start and people would see what we are doing. That year, we started with a small building with no toilets or running water. There was only myself, a cook, a gardener and five students. By



Photo by Andrew Shekangu, Alex Art Centre

Nokuthula principal: Connie Mngomezulu with things the children have made



Photo by Andrew Shabangu, Alex Art Centre

**"Mentally
handicapped
children have
a right to
have a
chance to
learn"**

the end of that year there were 45 students! Nokuthula was born and there was no going back.

"That is something I want to say to women - even if you don't have what you aimed for, just start and it will come to you.

"Today Nokuthula is well established. We have dedicated teachers who love the children.

We also have help from voluntary workers from the community. There are 120 students and we are planning to extend. If we had not taken the chances we did in 1984 it would never have happened."

SPEAK asked Connie why she had such a special interest in working for the community.

"My commitment to the community goes back to my

childhood in a small town in the Free State in the 1950's. My father died when I was very young. My mother struggled to raise five children. After she died, my brother, my husband and I worked together to help the family. I love my husband for that. We struggled together. That is how communities must come together. It's the only way. Together we can build a place of peace." ☪

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"YES! I AM A FEMINIST!"



Photo by DDP

Baleka Kgositsile: "How can people argue we should not have feminism?"

**What does feminism mean to you?
Glenda Daniels asked five women activists**

In the past, feminism was a dirty word in many political organisations and black progressive circles in South Africa. Many people thought feminism was only for white middle class women. They said feminism divided the people and black women should concentrate on fighting against apartheid and not fighting against men. But this is changing. Today many women are not afraid to say they are feminists.



Photo by Shamin Meer, SPEAK

**Ellen Mothopeng:
"It is important to educate men about feminism"**

Baleka Kgositsile, general secretary of the African National Congress (ANC) Women's League:

"I am a feminist who works full time for a women's organisation. We focus on issues which are central not only to middle class women but to all women, especially the historically disadvantaged African women.

"More than 50 percent of the population feel they can't express themselves freely because they are women. They continue to be abused, raped, battered, etc. How then can people argue that we should not have feminism?" she asked.

She said people should be focusing on feminism in South Africa "because this is a time of change to bring about a better future to all our people - including women of our country who have always been at the bottom of the pile".

Ellen Mothopeng, president of the Pan African Congress (PAC) African Women's Organisation said feminism does exist in South Africa but not to the same degree as in countries overseas. She said she did not want to call herself a feminist but that at times women are forced to be feminists because of the way men behave.

"When we challenge the men in the PAC they say the organisation has only



Photo by DDP

Thenjiwe Mtintso: "Gender oppression is as criminal as racial oppression"

Africanists, not men and women. They don't want to recognise the difference."

Mothopeng said there was a need for feminism in South Africa because all women are sisters regardless of their political beliefs. She said women were fighting for recognition in politics, and for power to oppose oppressive

customary laws. "It is important to educate men about feminism too so they don't label you a dangerous woman."

Thenjiwe Mtintso of the South African Communist Party (SACP) said: "A strong feminist movement is needed to change the unequal and unfair



Photo by Libby Lloyd, SPEAK

Kate Truscott: "Sexual harassment needs to be addressed urgently"

relations between men and women in society.”

Mtintso said working class women also have feminist views.

“In the labour movement working women raise feminist concerns like equal pay for equal work; maternity and paternity leave; child-care facilities at work and the fight against violence against women at work.”

Mtintso said lively debate is needed for the development of a strong feminist movement in the country.

“For example, we need to talk about whether it is possible for women of different races and classes to unite together as sisters.”

Unfortunately, she added, time is running out for this kind of debate because change is taking place quickly and women have to get involved in that process. “For instance, as it stands now, Codesa is almost completely a man’s world, dotted with a few women. We argue that gender oppression is as criminal as racial oppression, if not worse because it creeps into the privacy of our homes. Therefore it must be part of the discussion on the future of South Africa.”

Mtintso said there was a time in the liberation struggle, when it was felt all energy had to be united to “fight the common enemy”.

“This is now outdated. There was also the wrong belief that national liberation will automatically mean the liberation of women.”



Photo by Lesley Lawson

Rose Ngwenya: "Yes the oppression of women is as old and common as dirt itself"

Kate Truscott, the national co-ordinator of the Women’s Commission of Worker’s Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA), said there was definitely a need for an independent women’s organisation.

“There is a growing feminist awareness in unions, rape crisis centres, in the townships around health issues, child-care and in the student movement around sexual harassment. Sexual harassment needs to be addressed urgently as well as women’s health because of the high level of cervical cancer in the country.”

“Yes! I am a feminist!” said **Rose Ngwenya**, president of Imbeleko, the women’s organisation alligned to the Azanian People’s Organisation

(AZAPO). “There is a whole generation of women who won’t admit to being feminists because of propaganda spread by the media which is mainly controlled by men, which gives a false picture of feminism as middle class and westernised.”

She believes working class women do believe in feminism but, because they find it difficult to express themselves, they are often represented by white women who are seen as Western feminists.

Ngwenya said AZAPO is educating its members about non-sexism. “This does not mean sexism does not exist in the organisation. The need for a feminist awareness will always exist. The oppression of women is an international problem and is as old and as common as dirt itself.” ●

For the first time in South Africa, children have got together to draw up a Children's Charter. Gail Reagon was there

We have a dream...

At the end of May, children from all over the country met outside Cape Town to draw up a charter of their rights.

The children, aged between 10 and 16, demanded the right to participate in government, protection from violence, homes, education...

Children from church groups and schools, from shelters for homeless children and homes for disabled kids, from the rural areas and from the city streets attended the National Children's Summit organised by Molo Songololo magazine.

For many of the children it was the first time they had ever flown in an aeroplane, seen the sea or been in an hotel.

Molo Songololo staff member, Patric Solomons, told SPEAK he was amazed at what the children achieved.

"The beauty of the summit," he said, "was the way the children related to each other. There was so much the delegates had to discuss, yet they had time for each other. We were all amazed at the way they reached out towards each other."

Regional workshops were held all over the country before the national summit.

The children chaired the different sessions of the five day summit themselves. They discussed issues like education, violence, health, child labour and homelessness and sang, acted and danced out their demands before drawing up their charter.

Visitors to the summit said they were

amazed by the children's achievements. Some called it a junior Codesa. An observer from the United Nations said she had never seen anything like it in the world.

But it was South Africa's children who best described what they had been through.

"The racial barriers have finally been broken down," they said. "We are the ones who will eventually take away the old South Africa and bring in the new one."

They challenged all political parties "to adopt and support the Children's Charter so children's rights will no longer be ignored in South Africa and children will be placed first





Children act out their rights at the National Children's Summit

on the agenda, not last.”

What does the Charter say? Here are some of the points from the six page document.

- All children have the right to participate in the government;
- All children have the right to be protected from township and political violence and to have 'safe places';
- All children have the right to medical care without the permission of their parent or guardian;
- All teachers should be qualified and should treat children with patience, respect and dignity; teachers should be monitored to ensure they are protecting the rights of the child;
- There should be a minimum age of employment and no child should be forced to leave school prior to the completion of matric;
- No child should be forced to live on the streets and the government has a duty and final responsibility for homeless children.

The children have already begun making sure their demands are heard. They are demanding representation at Codesa 3 and have already started trying to win support for their demands. ☉

POLICE ACCUSED OF BEATING CHILD DELEGATE

One of the street children - or "strollers" as they prefer to be called - who attended the summit says he was arrested and beaten by police two days after the meeting.

Simphiwe, together with eight other children, was arrested for "squatting" on an empty plot in Cape Town.

Simphiwe says he told the police "children have a right to have somewhere to sleep". He says the police told him he was "too clever" and beat him, breaking his watch. He says he then collapsed. Police have denied beating him.

Simphiwe was asked to pay a R50 fine and released. The other children were taken to court for squatting.

On the day of the court case Simphiwe, together with workers from Molo Songololo, protested outside the court demanding housing, food and education for strollers.

The eight were released on condition they don't go back to the same plot of land. ☉

A celebration of women artists



Cold winter's night. By Sherene Seedat



Sherene T.
1989.



South African reality. By Avi Soofal



1960 Dompas arrest. By Sanna Naidoo

Artist Sanna Naidoo has been involved in organising women artists to support each other and share ideas. She believes there is a great deal of talent amongst women artists in South Africa. Here SPEAK celebrates some of this talent with the work of three woman artists: Sanna Naidoo, Sherene Seedat and Avi Soofal. All were part of a group of women artists who used to meet in Durban. They exhibited their work both locally in Durban and internationally at a cultural festival in Amsterdam, Holland.

Sanna says: "Many of the women are self-taught artists: mothers, grandmothers, ex-students and working women. "We paint and draw for different reasons. There are women painting for the sheer pleasure of having a hobby, some use art as a therapy to get over depression and personal problems, to survive the trauma of detention."

Of these works of art, Sanna says: "The art is clearly a reflection of life under apartheid South Africa. Our artists use their art as a way to express the enormity of the struggles in South Africa ... I hope every woman will unite with us and share in our work. It tells of our life of inequalities and abnormalities - above all, it tells of our life of hopes, of a vision for a better tomorrow."

Sanna Naidoo wants to meet other women artists. Write to her c/o SPEAK Magazine, PO Box 261363, Excom 2023, Johannesburg.

From Workers to Writers

This story comes from a book called "Hurry on the Machines". The book tells the stories of women who work in clothing factories in Johannesburg. The women wrote the book while attending literacy classes with the English Literacy Project. Their stories show what it is like to work in a factory. SPEAK has taken one of the stories, "We Taught the Supervisor a Lesson", to give you a taste of what the book is like



At one factory where I worked, we had this white supervisor who didn't like Africans. Her name was Elsie. "Shesha, work work," she said to us. "Die mense, die swart mense, hulle maak my mors" (these people, these black people, they make me angry). This was the way she spoke to us. People like her need a policeman next to them every time they talk.

There are big women at our factory. They got tired of Elsie. They said, "Now we will fix her up for this racism. We will cut her off for this."

You know what they did. One day we were making skirts and tops. There was a lot of work to do... maybe 150 garments to match. Elsie's job was to match the skirts with the tops.

We passed the garments to her. She's still complaining about us saying, "These swart people, these swart people". While she was busy complaining, we kept quiet and worked faster.

We gave her four skirts and four tops. She tried to match them. We carried on working. She's still looking for the skirts to match the tops, but it's all coming to her too fast. She hasn't matched the first four and there's already more work for her. She can't keep up. Skirts and tops are piling up all over the place. It's a big mess. She's not the last one in the line. Other women are waiting for her to pass the garments on to them. They get impatient. This one starts screaming she wants garments. The other one is

shouting because nothing is coming out. They all shout at her. They say, "Work Elsie! Work! Shesha Elsie, Shesha!" Then she starts crying. "Ek kan nie so werk nie. I can't work with these people." From that day on we named her "Crying Time". We taught her a good lesson.

Now today we understand each other. We work together. We call it "saamtrek" - we all pull together. We don't even break machines now because the supervisors have learnt to respect us, the workers.

They know that we are the people who are taking the work out. The factories are working like this through the workers, not the supervisors.

"Hurry on the Machines" is published by the English Literacy Project (ELP). The book costs R10.00. ●

WIN!

A COPY OF "HURRY ON THE MACHINES"

SPEAK has 10 copies of "Hurry on the Machines" for our readers.

Write to: SPEAK Book Competition, PO Box 261363, Excom, 2023, South Africa to win one of these books. Make sure you give us your name and address. We will hold a lucky draw on 1 August 1992 - so make sure your entries get to us before then. This competition is only open to people living in Southern Africa. The book winners names will be published in the September issue of SPEAK.

If you aren't one of the lucky winners, you can write to ELP, 314 Dunwell House, 35 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2001, to buy a copy. Or phone them at: (011) 403-2594.

Literacy organisations

Here are some of the places where people can do literacy classes:

English Literacy Project

314 Dunwell House, 35 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2017

English Resource Unit

St Andrew Centre, Office 7, 21 St Andrew Street, Durban, 4000

Umtapo Centre

Box 2792, Durban, 4000

Adult Learning Project

PO Box 478, Athlone, Cape Town, 7764

Eastern Cape Adult Learning Project

209 Capitol Building, 547 Main Street, North End, Port Elizabeth, 6001

Adult Literacy

PO Box 85, Umtata, Transkei

Trust for Christian Outreach & Education

PO Box 658, King Williams Town, 5600

There are two literacy training networks which you can write to to get more names of schools near you:

National Literacy Co-operation, 415 Hampstead House, 46 Bicard Street, Braamfontein, 2000.

SA Association for Literacy and Adult Education, PO Box 49408, Qualbert, 4078, Durban ●

Rape at the point of an army gun

**Security forces around the world
are guilty of raping and abusing
women according to a recent
international report**

At least five rape charges have been laid against members of the South African security forces this year. Four Phola Park women have charged members of the 32 Battalion with rape, and a 17-year-old Katlehong girl has charged a police officer with rape.

Human rights organisation, Amnesty International, says governments around the world turn a blind eye to such abuses of power by security forces.

Here is a shortened version of the Amnesty report.

Just before midnight on 18 May 1990 a wedding party was

stopped at an army road block in the north of India. The soldiers opened fire, killing the groom's brother and wounding nine people, including the bride, Mubina Gani and her husband.

Soldiers dragged the bride and her pregnant aunt into a field.

"They took off our clothes...and then we were raped," said Mubina. Four to six men raped me I think."

Government officials said the bus had been caught in the cross-fire. Later a police officer admitted the soldiers had fired on the bus and the two women had been gang-raped. Four of the soldiers were apparently suspended from duty.

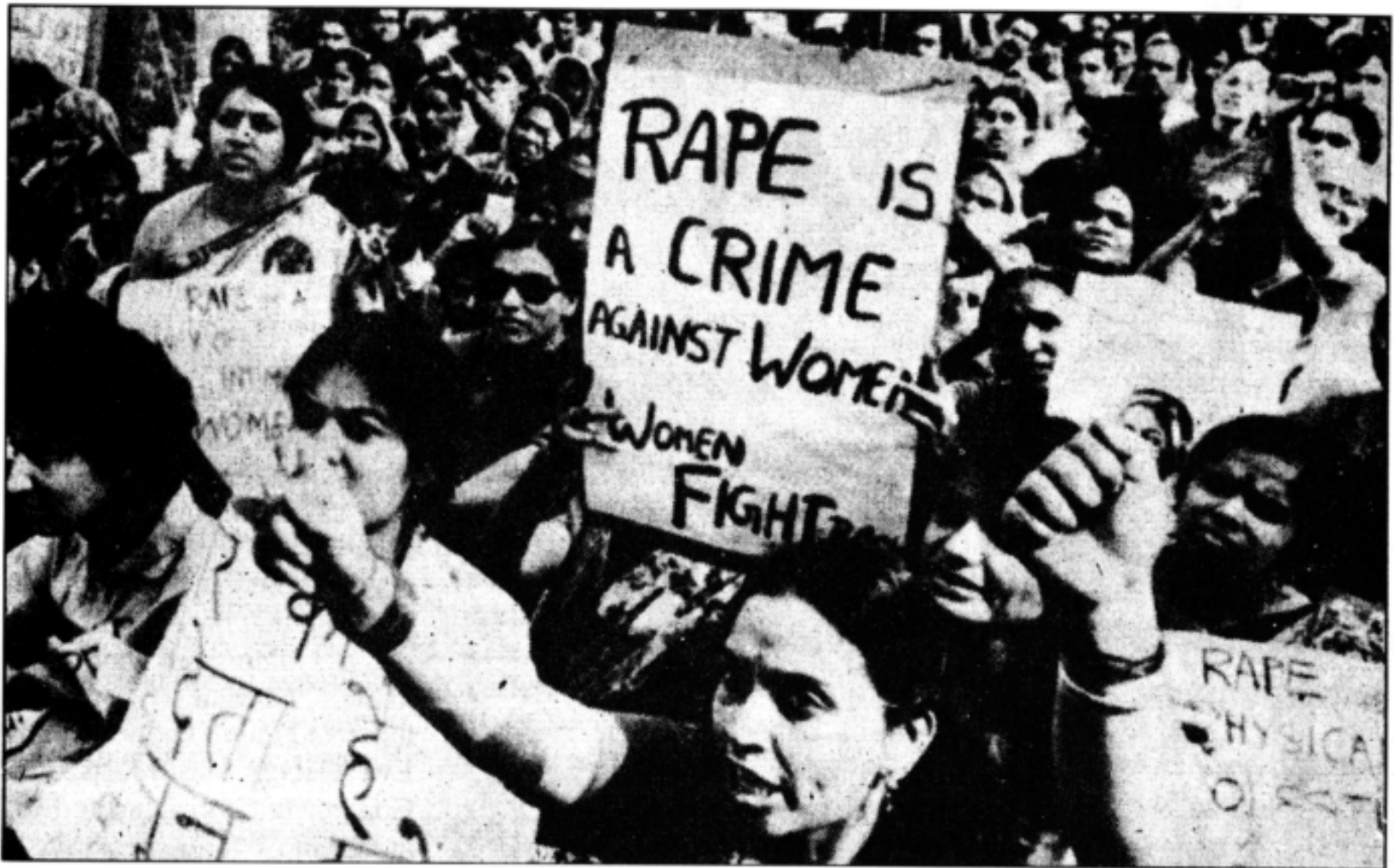
When a policeman or a soldier rapes a woman, that rape is an

act of torture for which the state is responsible.

International law says governments must protect all men, women and children from torture and that charges of torture must be properly investigated.

But many governments still refuse to see rape and sexual abuse by government agents as serious crimes. Rape charges against security forces are often not properly investigated. Even when the rapists are found guilty, the punishments are small.

In 1990 in the Philippines, Cherry Mendoza was arrested by soldiers. She was beaten and possibly drugged. When she came round, her body was sore, her trousers were undone and her underwear was stained with blood. She heard the soldiers



Picture by Amnesty International newsletter

Many governments around the world refuse to see rape by security forces as a crime

laughing about how they "scored on her". A medical examination showed her vagina had been badly cut. The police denied charges of sexual abuse.

Women who are political activists or community organisers have been targets around the world. Soldiers and police use rape or sexual abuse to shame these women, "punish" them or to get information.

Gunay Korkut, a 20-year-old Turkish student was arrested in May 1991. She was blindfolded, taken to police headquarters, and accused of helping murder a police officer. In her first week in prison she said she was often stripped, hung up by her wrists with leather straps, tortured with electric shocks and sexually molested. When Gunay still

denied the charges, she was laid naked on blocks of ice and given electric shocks to her feet, breast and genitals. She said she fainted. When she awoke she noticed blood coming from her vagina. Police told her she "was no longer a virgin". Four days later they threatened to repeat the torture. She signed a confession.

Some women are raped or abused because they are related to men the authorities want.

A 17-year-old girl in Bangladesh was brutally raped because her brother was suspected of being a political activist. "A lieutenant raped me, followed by another soldier. Each one raped me twice. The officer said he was going to rape my sister-in-law to pay for

my brother's activities. Later I went inside the house and found my sister-in-law unconscious. Two of them raped her."

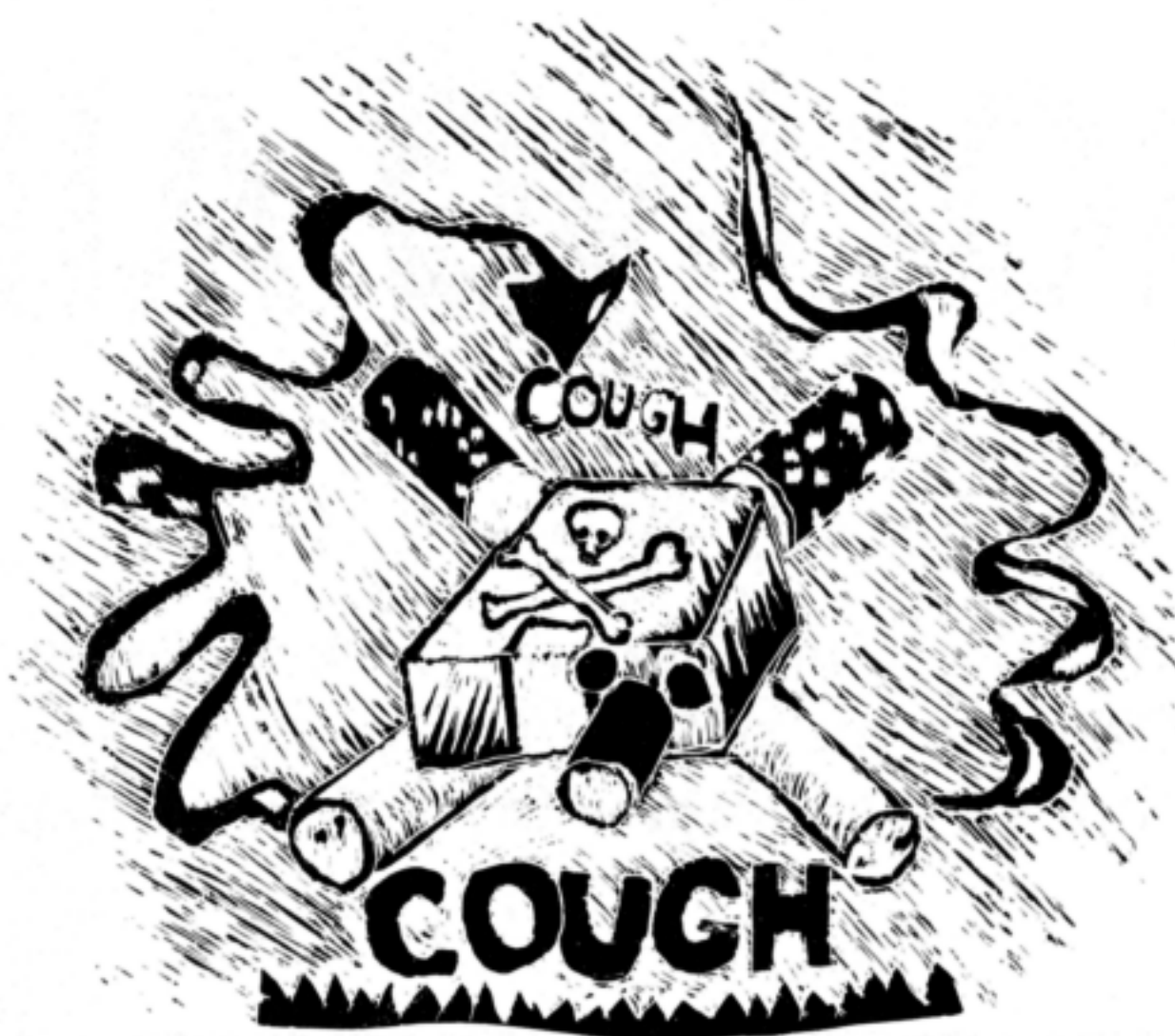
Many of the attackers go free because their victims are too terrified or ashamed to lay charges. In some societies, raped women are seen as dirty. Some governments have laws which punish the rape survivors. Pakistani women found guilty of sex outside marriage - including rape - can be publically whipped, sent to jail or stoned to death.

This abuse around the world is especially frightening as these rapists are the same police and soldiers supposed to protect the public. Governments around the world have full responsibility for rape and sexual abuse in prisons. ♣

months of life they are at greater risk of cot death.

• **Chest illness:** Young children in homes where parents smoke are more likely to suffer from bronchitis, pneumonia or chest infections.

• **Asthma:** Tobacco smoke can set off an attack of asthma in children who suffer from asthma.



encourage young girls to associate smoking with being sexy, "modern", and independent. They believe this dream, and by the time they wake up they are hooked to the nicotine in cigarettes, and it becomes difficult to stop smoking.

• **Non-smokers must be protected**

EDUCATION, PROTECTION, SUPPORT

What can women do to protect themselves and society from the dangers of tobacco?

• **We need to make sure that women do not start using tobacco.** On No Tobacco Day, Nelson Mandela appealed to women: "because of cultural traditions few of you smoke. Remain non-smokers. Prize your growing independence and do not chain yourselves to cigarettes". More and more young black women have started smoking. Because it is not culturally acceptable they do not smoke in public. In

many countries smoking is now more common among teenage girls than boys.

Teenage girls today know very little about the dangers of smoking. Health education programmes must be started in schools, workplaces and health care centres to warn people of the dangers of smoking.

Women can also influence men to stop smoking.

• **Advertising of tobacco must be banned.** Young people are the main target for the tobacco industry. As older smokers die from smoking, or give up the habit, young new smokers must be found to keep up the sales and profits of the tobacco industry. Large sums of money are spent on cigarette advertisements which

from the harmful effects of other people's smoking.

The law must ban or restrict smoking in public places and at work. Parents must learn not to smoke near their children, especially babies.

• **Smokers must be given support** to help them to deal with why many of them continue to smoke.

Only by involving women will we be able to improve women's health. Women who need more information or who want to become actively involved in the issue should contact:

National Council Against Smoking, PO Box 23244, Joubert Park 2044. ☎

EDUCATING AROUND AIDS

Transport and General Worker's Union (TGWU) is one of the trade unions taking a firm step forward with AIDS education

Thirty-year old Seripe has been the AIDS co-ordinator of TGWU for just over a year.

SPEAK: Why did your union decide to employ a full-time AIDS co-ordinator?

SERIPE: Because we wanted to inform workers about AIDS.

SPEAK: What do you do?

SERIPE: My main task is to tell workers about AIDS through workshops. I sometimes give advice to workers who think they may be HIV positive. I do not counsel them because I do not have the skills to do that. But I do give advice. We are busy working

Thoraya Pandya spoke to TGWU's AIDS co-ordinator Bafana Seripe to find out about this.

out a policy on AIDS in the union so I also do research for that.

SPEAK: Many people are doing research on AIDS. How is the research that you are doing different?

SERIPE: Our research looks at AIDS from a worker's point of view. AIDS is not only a medical issue. It is also about people's living conditions. We

look at attitudes of bosses to people who are HIV positive. Often bosses tell workers to go for tests or find work elsewhere. It should be up to the individual to decide if she/he wants to take a test and not up to the boss. We also do research on women and AIDS.

SPEAK: Why is "women and AIDS" part of your research?

SERIPE: Women are always subjected to male domination. Sexual relationships are no exception. In many cases, men have a number of sexual relationships. If a woman says a man must wear a condom, it usually leads to the man using physical violence or even

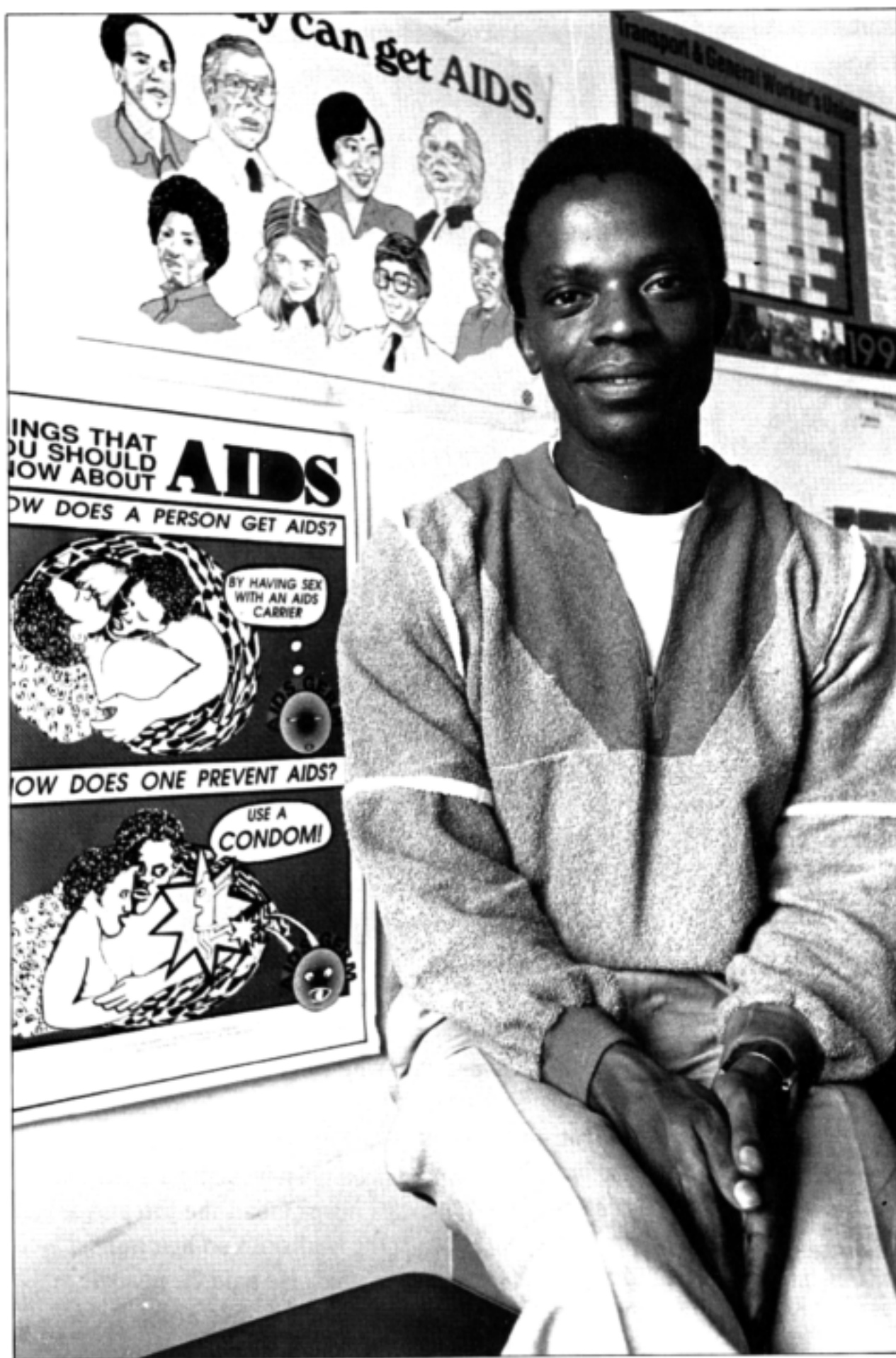


Photo by Anna Zeminaki

Taking AIDS seriously - Bafana Seripe is TGWU's AIDS co-ordinator.

ending the relationship for daring to “demand” something like that.

SPEAK: If you talk about AIDS you have to talk about sex. Many people do not want to talk about sex openly. How do you deal with this sensitive subject?

SERIPE: Of course it’s difficult, but workers are opening up about the subject because they hear

stories about people who are HIV positive or who have died of AIDS. There are many things workers don’t understand and ask about when we hold workshops. Although they may be prepared to talk about HIV and AIDS, they are not eager to change the way they live. Some workers say they will end their relationships if

“their women” tell them to wear condoms.

SPEAK: Do you try to change their way of thinking?

SERIPE: Sometimes I try to convince them, but so many men believe if they wear condoms they are not “real” men. Some of them actually believe that it is not normal to

have a relationship with only one woman. But I think they are getting more and more scared because so many people have already died of AIDS.

I strongly feel women should stand up against men whom they fear may have the virus. If a women can say "NO" to unsafe sex then it will really make an impact. Women must begin to say "we have the right to protect ourselves".

SPEAK: Earlier on you said bosses force workers to go for HIV test, How is the union dealing with this problem?

SERIPE: Many workers were tested illegally by employers. Some workers had already gone for tests and so there was very little we could do. Many workers were not even counselled. In most cases, workers know so little about AIDS and just accept HIV testing because they fear losing their jobs. Many workers were tested illegally by employers.

SPEAK: How did you become the AIDS co-ordinator of TGWU?

SERIPE: In 1986 I worked on a project called the Workplace Information Group (WIG) which did a lot of work with trade unions. One of the issues we looked at was AIDS and although I was not directly working with the AIDS project I became involved anyway because I was interested to know more.

SPEAK: Has your work influenced the way you live?

SERIPE: I must admit, my knowledge of AIDS has had a great influence on my attitude towards sexual relationships. Although I never had many relationships at one time, I never really thought it was a problem. But it is, and now, no matter where I am, I always find myself telling people to practice safe sex and not to have many sexual relationships. Some of them just laugh at me and say they will never wear a condom or stop having many girlfriends. ●

JOB

Be careful about some of the job and training offers published! Some of them are made by people trying to exploit women for sex or to steal their money

Carol September (not her real name), 20, was very excited when she got an interview for a job as a general administrator. She had not had a job for nearly a year.

On the day of the interview, she arrived early at the house address she had been given. The door was opened by a man wearing only a towel. He told her to wait while he got changed.

During the interview September felt something was wrong - the man was only wearing a shirt over his towel. Then he told her she had the job and asked her to go with him to the bedroom so he could measure her for medical aid. He said he needed to measure her legs, her breasts and her nipples. September realised what was happening and ran away.

She spoke to an advice office worker about the incident who told her many women had had the same experience.

Riska Abrahams had a problem of a different sort. She was the victim of someone out to make quick money.

Abrahams saw an advert offering a six month modelling course. She applied and paid R1 500 for the course. After her training, her teacher gave her a certificate and said modelling agencies would be contacting her in the next week.

Abrahams waited - but no-one ever phoned!

She went back to the "school" to ask what had happened. The "school" had disappeared and the

HUNTING?



... Be Careful!

building was empty. When she made enquiries about the so-called modelling school at different model agencies, they said they had never heard of it or of her "teacher".

Here are some things to watch out for so as not to get conned like Carol September or Riska Abrahams:

- Find out if the so-called company or school exists before answering the advert or going for an interview. You can phone general enquiries (at 1023) to see if the company or school is listed.

- When you answer the advert, ask what type of a business or school it is, how many people work there, how many people have been trained etc. Before

going for an interview try to check whether the company or school is known by people doing the same sort of business.

- Try to go to the address given to you before the interview to see if it exists.

- If you decide to go to the interview, but feel worried, take a friend or a family member with you.

- Should things go wrong and you feel something bad may happen, take your things and leave immediately.

- If someone does cheat you or harass you, go to your nearest advice office and ask them to help you lay a charge against the person or company.

This may cost effort and a few telephone calls but in the end it will be worth it. ☺

Getting an ID book

I dentity Documents (ID's) are issued by the Department of Home Affairs. You must go to the nearest Home Affairs office to apply for this document.

You need to take with you:

■ **Your birth certificate** or a certified copy of this certificate. Take the photocopy of your birth certificate to a post office, police station or priest to get it certified (prove it is not a fake).

If you don't have a birth certificate you have to first prove to the authorities you are who you say you are.

If your birth certificate has been lost, you must apply at

the Home Affairs office for a new one. You will need signed letters - called affidavits - from a hospital, the school you went to, your parents and/or your workplace. The letters must say how long they have known you.

If you were not registered at birth, the officials at Home Affairs will want to interview you. They will ask you about yourself and your family. You will also need signed letters (affidavits) from a hospital, your

South Africans could soon have to vote for an interim government. People might have to have ID books to vote. SPEAK looks at how to get this document



school, your parents, a priest and/or your workplace.

■ **Two ID-size photographs.**

■ **Your marriage certificate**, if you are married, or if you are divorced, your **divorce papers**. If your husband or wife has died, you must take a copy of the death certificate.

You will have to fill in an application form at Home

Affairs. Once you have filled in the form, an official will take your finger prints.

Your ID will be posted to you after your application has been approved. This should take about three weeks, but some people wait for months before getting their ID's.

W hen you get your ID, check that all the information is correct. Recently many ID books have had the wrong birth date printed in them. Many pensioners have had problems claiming their pensions because of this. It is very

important to check this - the ID could, for example, say you are too young to vote.

Telephone numbers of Home Affairs offices:

Cape Town

(021) 462 4970

Johannesburg

(011) 836 3228

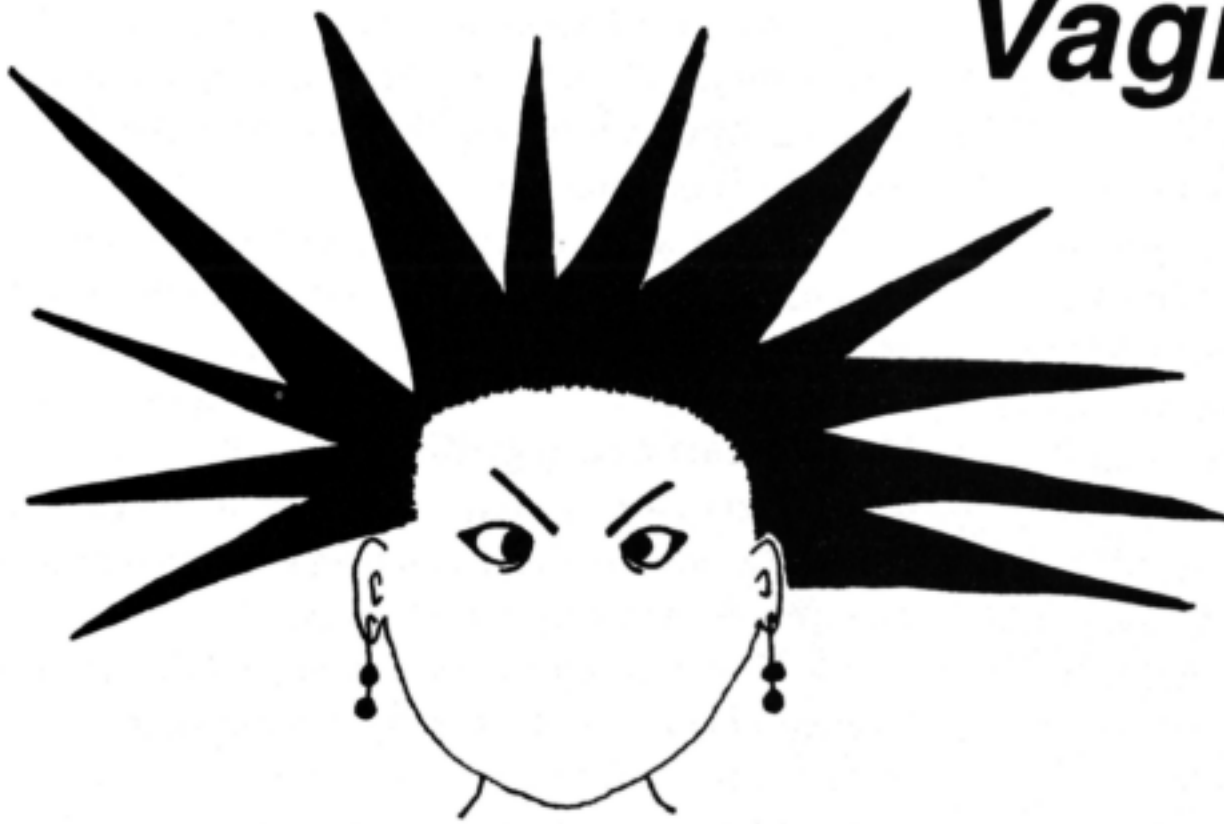
Durban

(031) 306 2746

Port Elizabeth

(041) 55 6880 ○

Vaginal thrush



...*That itch again*

Vaginal thrush is as common as flu. SPEAK looks at what causes thrush and how to treat it

What is thrush?

Ask any woman you know about vaginal thrush and she will have her own story to tell. "It drives me mad," said one woman. "I just want to scratch down there - but I can't in front of others. It's like torture - especially when I'm out somewhere." Very few women have not suffered from the horrible itching and thick white discharge caused by thrush.

What causes thrush?

Thrush is caused by a yeast fungus called *candida albicans*. This is why thrush is sometimes called "candida". *Candida albicans* is always present in the vagina and anus. A normal healthy vagina has slightly acid fluid (like vinegar). If the acid fluid changes in some way, candida is likely to grow out of control. When this happens thick, white discharge like *amasi* or cottage cheese fills the vagina. The discharge causes terrible itching and the vagina becomes red and sore.

When are women most likely to get vaginal thrush?

- When it is hot and you sweat a lot. Thrush grows quickly in a warm, wet environment.
- During pregnancy and when using contraception like the Pill or the Injection. Acid fluid in your vagina changes when you are pregnant or using the Pill or Injection.
- When suffering from sugar diabetes. The urine then has a lot of sugar, which encourages thrush to grow.
- When taking antibiotics. Antibiotics destroy all bacteria in the body, including the harmless bacteria which live in the vagina and keep candida under control. When these bacteria are destroyed the candida grows and the result is a thrush infection.
- When you have been working too hard, not getting enough sleep and not eating the right food or not getting enough food, your body becomes weak and you easily get thrush.
- Through sex with a partner who has thrush.

Men can have thrush and not show any symptoms.

What to do when you have thrush

■ The usual treatment for thrush is anti-fungal **medication** like Canestan or Mycostatin. This medication can come in the form of cream, pessaries (tablets which can be put up the vagina) or tablets which you swallow. You must finish the whole course of medication or tablets or your infection will come back.

Anti-fungal creams and tablets are only available with a doctor's prescription. Many women find this inconvenient. This treatment is also very expensive. Prices of anti-fungal treatments range from R40-00 to R100-00.

■ You can also try to **treat yourself**.

* Use plain **yoghurt** in your vagina. Yoghurt helps to get the vagina back to its acidity. It also soothes the itchiness.

* Wash your vagina with a mixture of two teaspoons of **vinegar** in one litre of warm water or put a few tablespoons of vinegar in the bath water. It helps the same way yoghurt does. Do not use too much vinegar as it can burn! It is not good to do this too often because it might affect the natural fluids of the vagina.

* Add **salt** to your bath - enough to make water taste slightly salty.

* Apply **gentian violet** to the vagina. This treatment is very effective, although it is messy. Use sanitary pads to stop the gentian violet from staining your underwear.

* Do not wash your vagina with soap when you have thrush because this will make the thrush worse.

How to can avoid getting thrush

■ Wear clean cotton underwear. Nylon pantyhose and tight pants and jeans keep in heat and wetness and help thrush to grow.

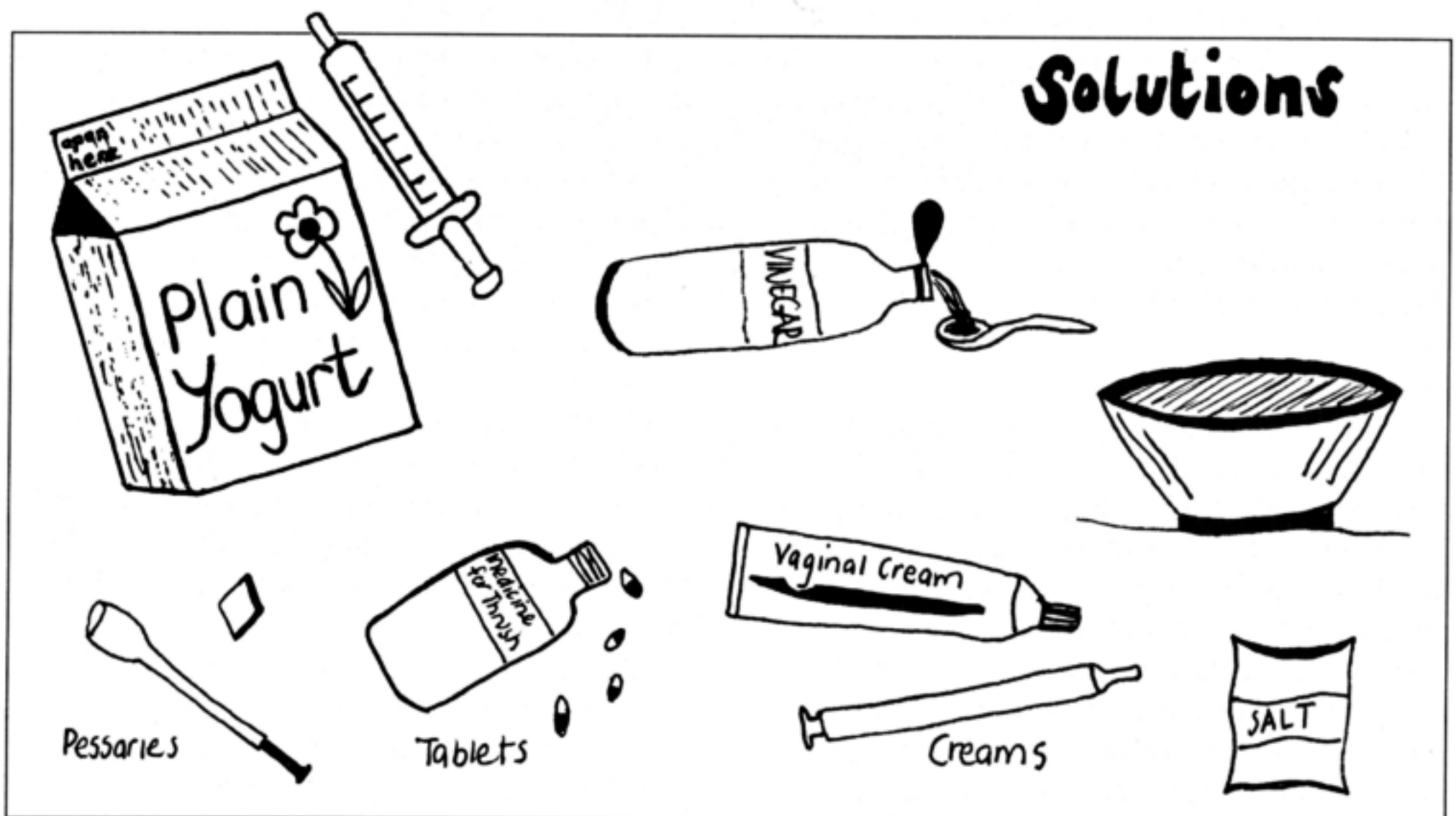
■ Never use sprays on the vagina. Feminine hygiene sprays (or other sprays) cause skin irritation and infections.

■ After using the toilet, wipe from front to back, **never** from back to front as this can spread infection from the anus to the vagina.

■ If you have one talk to your partner. If thrush keeps coming back your partner may need to use cream as well. It is better not to have sex when you have thrush. Sex will make your thrush infection worse. You may also infect your partner who will then reinfect you.

■ Avoid sugary foods and foods with refined starch. Try to eat fresh and healthy foods.

■ Try to get enough sleep and avoid stress. ☼



As a matter of fact...

Transkei bans AIDS information

The Transkeian government has banned the release of information to the media about AIDS cases in the country. The reason? The Health Minister says journalists have distorted information given to them by the government on AIDS cases.



Women angry about rape remark

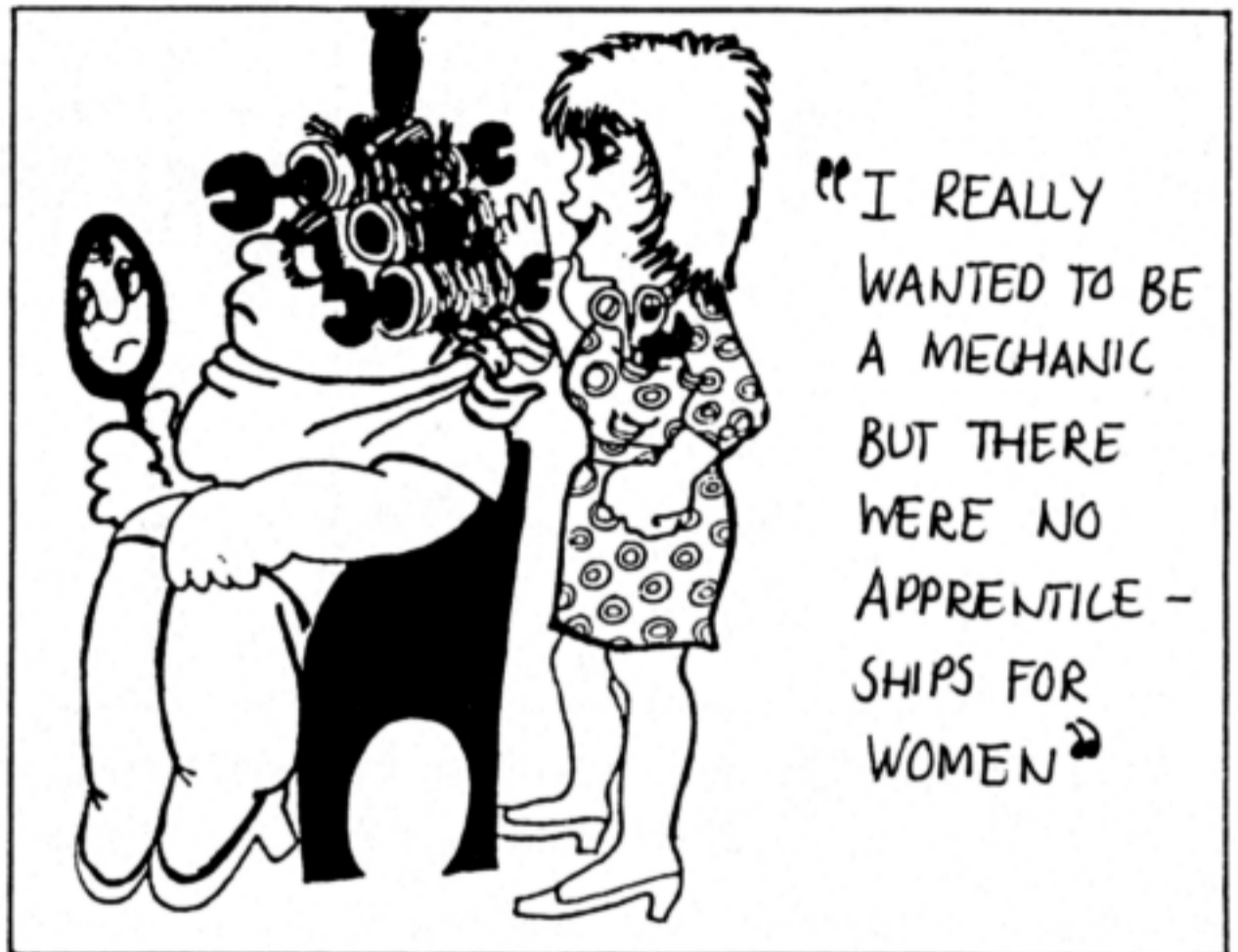
Cape Town women's group Wildfire is outraged by a magistrate's remark that it was unlikely a 24 year-old rape victim would suffer psychologically from being raped and held captive for a night because she had a child. Magistrate AP Kotze made the remark when he sentenced the rapist.

"You are dealing with a woman who has a child. She knows sexual intercourse ... she's an adult woman, she can deal with something of this nature," he said.



Nicaragua: Women take up arms

200 women have taken up arms in northern Nicaragua to put pressure on President Chamorro to provide childcare and free medicine. The guerrilla group are said to include former Sandinista



soldiers and wives of Contra rebels.



Smoking will kill a million women

A World Health Organisation study predicts that by the year 2020, one million women would have died due to smoking-related illnesses.



Hunger strikers released

Thirty six Imbali women were released from jail after a five-day hunger strike. The women were arrested in mid-May staging a sit-in at Alexandra police station demanding the withdrawal of the 32 Battalion,

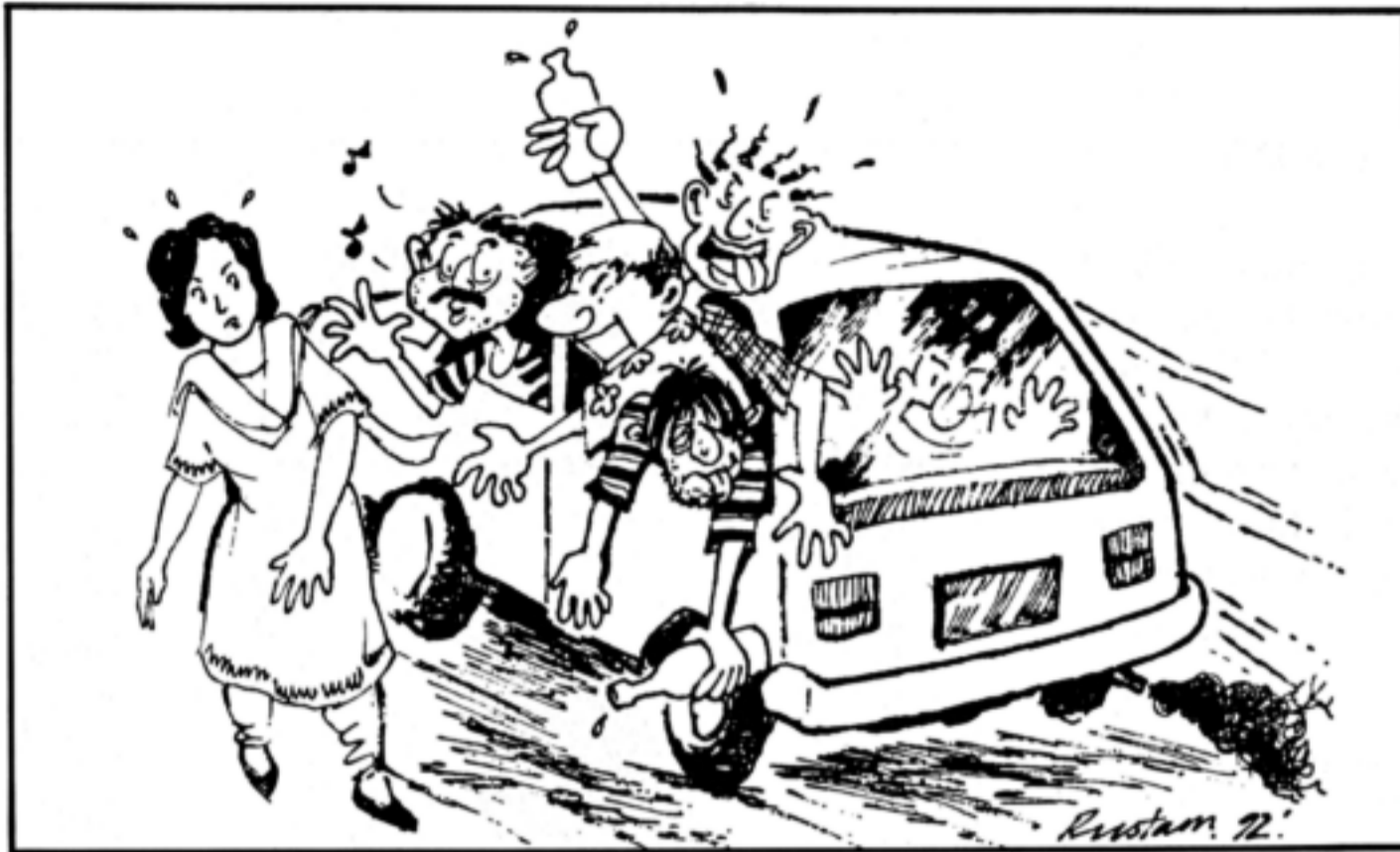
the KwaZulu Police and the SAP riot squad from Imbali in Natal. They were held in jail for two weeks. They refused bail and charges of trespassing brought against them were dropped.



ANC undecided on abortion and prostitution

At the ANC Policy Conference held on 28 - 31 May, the Health Commission proposed that abortion be legalised because over 250 000 illegal and unsafe abortions take place in South Africa every year. They said prostitution should be legalised. Conference refused to pass the resolutions, saying they were too sensitive and should be sent back to the branches. ☉

Taxi Talk



Drawing from Mankishi

Why do men think they have a right to fondle any women they walk past? asks Zingisa Mkhuma

Something intrigues me about South African men.

They have the nerve to take over tough jobs like running Codesa, but the minute they set foot on the streets they seem unable to keep their hands in their pockets. While they go on about rights for all, they show little respect for women.

One needs to take a walk around Johannesburg to see what I am talking about. Every Siphos and Tom says "hallo" to you. It is not unusual to find strange hands fondling you.

You are damned if you respond and damned if you don't.

Silence means you are on a "high horse". This writer has been called a prostitute, an Aids carrier, a lesbian... Most of my women friends have been called "bitch" so often they jokingly say "bitch" is their second name.

Said one desperate groper: "She prefers white men who pay for it."

I have heard a worker on the streets say to a woman that beneath his overalls "lives" a real man who would make her happy "unlike the sissies who drive flashy cars you women prefer".

If you are polite and return the "hallo", the pest demands all your personal details.

I have stopped walking on the pavements to save my poor bum from the city pinchers. If you find out who pinched you, you will be told how the "handsome hunk" was doing you a favour - you are so ugly no other man in their right mind would want anything to do with you.

Taxi drivers also seem to have it in for women. Every time they fight, they describe each other's mother's bodies in very frightening words. One monster even swore he had fathered the other man.

Where does all this disrespect for women come from? Women have been responsible for bringing up these men who show so little respect for them.

In most families in my neighbourhood where the fathers were still alive, they were either out with friends or too drunk to care about the goings on in the family.

I think I can hear somebody saying black men have been humiliated by apartheid, and therefore take this out on their womenfolk.

Aren't we all victims of apartheid? Shouldn't we respect each other more because of the hardships we have faced - not take it out on others? ☉

NOTICES

Join us in the launch of our book

NO TURNING BACK

Fighting for gender
equality in the unions



AT: Annabels
Down Town Inn
cnr Twist & Plein St
(opp Joubert Park)

DATE: 11 July 1992
TIME: 1.30pm
RSVP: 333 9746 ext 113

Lacom (Sached), Speak &
Cosatu Wits Women's Forum

If you want to put a notice on this board, these are our deadlines:

ISSUE	IN BY
August	1 July
September	1 August
October	1 September
November	1 October

Unfortunately we can't promise that there will always be space for all notices - but we will do our best!

About Videos!

Have you been trying to get hold of films or videos about South Africa and struggles in other countries? The Film Resource Unit has a wide range of resources for the purposes of education and training

Contact them at:
203 Normandie Court
72 Delvers Street
Johannesburg
Tel: (011) 29 6967

* * *

In Cape Town there is the Community Video Education Trust (Covet)

Contact them at:
Tel: (021) 448 4024

Enter Contest

Artists wanting to enter an annual fine arts competition organised by the Kempton Park Town Council should contact Ronelle Engelbrecht on Tel: (011) 921 2314 now!!! The first prize is R10 000, second prize R5 000 and third R2 500.

Cosaw will be hosting a talk on "How to get into the print media - The politics of publishing" on Saturday 18 July.

For more details:
Tel: (011) 836 9594

Building a children's movement



- Do you want to start a children's resource centre in your area?
- There's a book full of ideas and advice on how to do it.
- The book is called "Building... the Children's Movement" and it costs R5.00.

To get the book send your money to:
Children's Resource Centre
Community House
Salt River Road
Salt River, Cape Town
7925

women



equality by the year 2000

