

SPEAK

PUTTING WOMEN FIRST

NO 66

NOVEMBER 1994

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it up**

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A radio/cassette
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WHEN LOVE HURTS

**Mmatshilo Motsei
speaks out**



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*We sadly say goodbye to
Thoraya Pandy and Libby
Lloyd. We wish to thank
them for their contribution
to the project and wish
them well in their new
jobs.*

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Giselle Wulfsohn

COMMENT

Don't you think the government's decision to make August 9, National Women's Day a public holiday is great news?

We certainly think so. South African women should celebrate this victory. It confirms the important role women played, and will continue to play, in our struggle for a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa.

It will also serve as a reminder of the role women continues to play in our society. Because, more often than not, the contribution women make goes by unnoticed.

Lets hope the government's commitment to non-sexism does not end there. But this is not the end of our struggle.

What we want to see now is a police force sensitive to women who are battered, raped and abused in homes and relationships. We also want to see a gender sensitive and user-friendly justice system which upholds women's rights.

We want to see an education programme for people who cannot read and write. This will help them understand the Interim Constitution and Bill of Rights.

How else will women know that they can buy land, lay charges against their abusive husbands/partners and so on.

Lets not "wait and see" what the government does next. Lets continue to lobby for women's rights. This is our struggle and it will shape our future and that of our children.

Talk Back

When the postbag arrives, we rush to open your letters. We are interested to know which articles you liked or didn't like, and what debates you want to open. Keep writing! Send your views to:
The Editor, SPEAK, PO Box 556, Johannesburg,
2000, South Africa

Why employ pensioners?

The economy of our country is not on a sound footing. Thousands of people are without jobs. Work chances for these people are blown by employers who employ pensioners, instead of young people who can do their work properly. This practice is common among factory owners.

They seem to rely on pensioners because they do not go on strike, or make demands on management. They accept whatever comes their way.

These same employees do not do much around the workplace. They are only good at watching others, and gossiping with employers.

Pensioners earn more money than other employees, who do much more work than them.

On the other hand, employers complain about low production. They do not seem interested in finding out why production is low. This is selfishness on the part of these employers.

*June Madingwane
Johannesburg*

Free education for our children

This is the first letter I have written to SPEAK. Words cannot explain how I feel about our local school. It is from

Sub A to Standard 8.

Our children have to go and attend school elsewhere when they complete Standard 8. The other thing is that there is no free education for our children.

This in a way, is an open letter to our Premier, Matthew Phosa, to sort this out before next year. We want our children to benefit from this government scheme.

*Sipho Nkosi
Chrissiesmeer*

Language not sexist

In your September issue, you ran a story on sexist language. I would like to disagree that the English language is sexist.

There are words with 'men' in them, but this does not exclude women. Women just want to cause confusion by misinterpreting the words. Do women want to do away with men completely?

Violence must have done something wrong to our partners. Why should women think language oppresses them? Who created language?

Words like postman, chairman, and so on, can be changed to postlady, chairlady, to suit the sex of the person doing the job.

Such words have been used for a

long time because in the past, women were housekeepers while men went out to work.

Please, our lovely ones, forgive the English language. It has nothing to do with oppression.

*Richard Seziba
Botswana*

We think the issue of sexism in language stands. We don't see why it should be necessary to know the sex of a person doing a job. Surely it's the job a person does that is important. By the way, we are interested to know whether you would call men "our lovely ones"? — Editor

Responsibility before rights

I agree completely with SPEAK magazine's position that every woman has a right to decide about her own body, and life. However, what gives her the right to decide to end the life of another human being, just because it is inside her?

Supporters of abortion are too concerned with a woman's rights. What about her responsibilities?

*Beverly David
Wyebank*

When does a foetus become a human being? — Editor

Unwanted attention

I have a problem that I'm sure many women can understand. Every day as I walk to work many men call out "hey baby" or "hey darling" as I pass them in the street. This happens even though I am minding my own business and do not want their attention.

If this isn't bad enough, when I ignore these men some of them become angry and say very nasty things about me. This makes me feel terrible and sometimes I wonder if I am being rude or inconsiderate.

I think that many women feel it is their fault if the men get angry because they were ignored. I want to tell all women that it is your right to ignore them. We do not have to pay attention to anyone just because they demand it. We must keep in mind that they are being disrespectful to us

by calling out whatever they please without a thought for our feelings.

I also want to tell all men who call out to women in the street that they will have a better chance with a woman by keeping quiet and smiling prettily from a safe distance.

*Cindy
Hillbrow*

We couldn't agree with you more. — Editor

The lucky winner of our SPEAK SLOGAN COMPETITION is Amos B. Congratulations!

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Kwa-Sophie

No genders here

A recent local union meeting was attended only by men. When the chairperson was going through the incoming correspondence, an invitation to attend a gender workshop came up. Since there are no genders here tonight, said the chairperson, we don't have to discuss this issue!

Rape is rape

A friend of mine was running a workshop on sexual harassment with a group of men workers. They had a discussion about what action they would take if a supervisor raped a woman worker from their factory. The group got angry. They would want to kill him, they said. What if a fellow worker raped a woman worker? That's different, they said,



calming down, we'd have to deal with this carefully ... was it his first offence?

It's strange, said my friend, I always thought rape was rape, no matter who the rapist.

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What about fathers?

The Weekly Mail and Guardian published a story which said a creche for the children of women Members of Parliament (MP's) had been opened in Cape Town. Is it taken for granted that men MP's who are fathers have women at home to care for their children?

Another side of Cosatu

We've heard there was some serious sexual harassment at Cosatu's 5th congress in September. Will Cosatu be letting the public know what happened?

Quote of the Month

"I advise other young women not to rush into marriage until they have achieved their goals in life. Always be proud of who and what you are. Women have to be determined if we want to do something. Don't look back."

— Patricia Mabviko, a 22-year-old Zimbabwean television and radio presenter.



November 25 INTERNATIONAL DAY TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

*A call to women:
Organise!
Mobilise!
Make your
voices heard!*

STORY COMPETITION

"NOKUKHANYA" is the life story of Nokukhanya Luthuli. President Mandela named her "The Mother of the Nation." She is the widow of Chief Albert Luthuli. Read this book to compare her life with your own. Learn about many events of the past 100 years in South Africa.

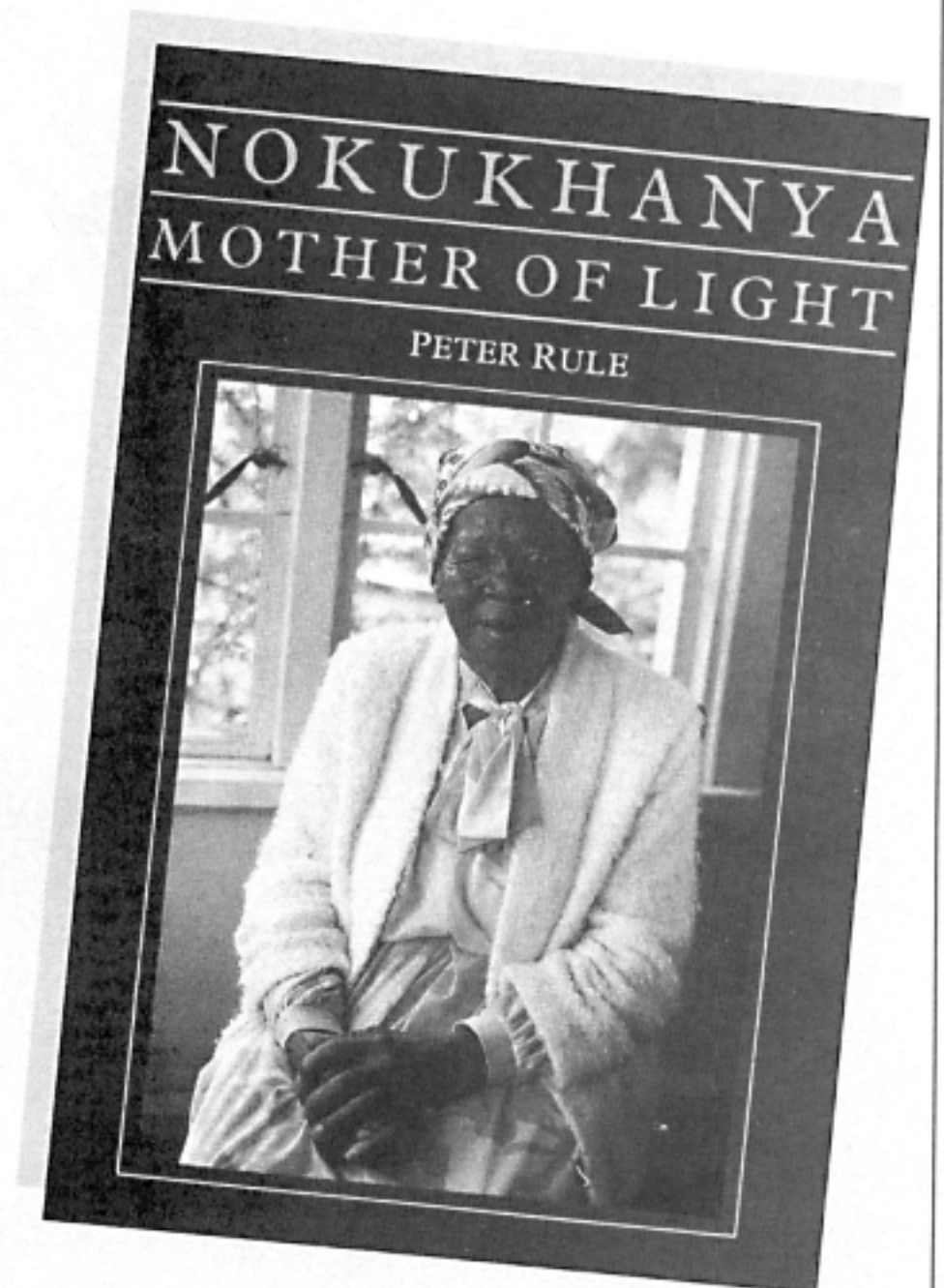
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The Grail
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Braamfontein 2017

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Why not give "NOKUKHANYA" as a Christmas present?

A black and white portrait of Mmatshilo Motsei, a woman with a patterned headwrap, wearing a dark top and multiple necklaces and bracelets. She is gesturing with her right hand. The background is plain white.

LOVE

Men must take responsibility for their violent acts against women, says Agisanang's Mmatshilo Motsei. How? asks Rosalee Telela

SHOULDN'T HURT

She is slapped, punched, sworn at, kicked, raped, strangled, burnt. She bruises, loses an eye, a kidney, an unborn baby, her confidence. Maybe even her life.

Brutality against women in our society is real. Frightening, real, very common, and mostly ignored.

Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training (Adapt), deals with this brutality every day. You will find Adapt inside the brightly coloured walls of Alexandra Clinic, Alexandra Township. There, a very special woman, Mmatshilo Motsei, deals with the painful reality of violence against women. She is the project's founder.

Meet Mmatshilo Motsei. Outspoken, confident, courageous. Herself a survivor of violent abuse. An organiser for change. How did it all begin?

When the beatings began, Motsei was depressed and confused. She even thought of committing suicide.

"The pain becomes so much that you can't go on. I understand when women in violent relationships are confused. One day they decide to leave the abuser, the next day they don't.

"But we don't have to be hard on ourselves. There are too many people battering us. We don't have to do it ourselves. We need to be gentle with ourselves and support each other, as women."

Although she believes women can nurture and love each other, they do not always support one

another.

"When I decided to leave, my mother supported my decision. Unfortunately for most women in our community, their mothers tell them to go back, even if their husbands beat them up daily.

"They say we received lobola from these people, and, as a wife, you should withstand all the problems that come with being married."

Motsei says there are traditional ways of dealing with marital problems such as wife abuse. Unfortunately, these do not take into account what the woman thinks or feels.

"After your family and his family have sat down and talked about the problems, most of the time you're just told to go back to your partner. He continues to abuse you, knowing that even if you go home, another 'indaba' will be called, and you will be sent back to him."

Motsei believes men's violent behaviour has a lot to do with the history of this country, and how respect and pride have broken down.

"The violence that comes with racism and poverty has pushed people to do things which they wouldn't normally do."

However, Motsei says poverty is not the main cause of violence against women.

"Men learn from an early age to see and treat women as objects. They have been raised to believe

that a real man is one who is able to control women by being aggressive and violent."

South African structures, institutions, cultures and practices (which are male dominated) justify, maintain and produce violence.

"When a woman goes to a religious leader for advice, she is told to love, honour, obey, and suffer in silence. Sometimes we are even told it is our fault men abuse us.

"I know of a priest in Soweto who tells the women who go to see him, 'If your husband beats you, it's a cross you should carry, like Jesus Christ'."

Motsei says the use of scriptures to justify violence is only

'Men learn from an early age to see and treat women as objects. They have been raised to believe that a real man is one who is able to control women by being aggressive and violent.'

one side of the story.

"Those priests do not mention that in the same chapter they quote, there is a request for men to respect and love women as they would love their own bodies."

She also believes it is not the will of God that women should live with violence.

"I think God would expect us to speak out against violence, and do something about it."

A closer look at history tells how violence against women was

discouraged.

“Long ago, in most African cultures, when you got married, one of the things said to the man was ‘if you don’t want her anymore, you must bring her back. Don’t hurt her.’”

Although most health workers are women, most cases of women abuse are not reported, says Motsei.

“Many nurses have experienced violence in their lives. When they come across a woman who has been battered or raped,

“This is where the role of women’s groups, associations, stokvels and prayer meetings come in. Women are organised in so many ways. They have to start discussing issues like rape, abuse and abortion. If a few women speak out, others are going to follow.

“If there is a death in your area where a woman has been killed by her husband, make noise about it. Expose the man who did it.”

The Constitution, Bill of Rights, Criminal Procedure Act, and the Prevention of Family

“They have to look closely at how they have been raised, because these things are learned early in life. It starts with the games boys and girls play.”

Motsei has some ideas about getting men to take responsibility.

“I think we do have men who are our allies. Men who condemn gender violence as strongly as we do. Those men could be trained as counsellors for abusive men. They can be role models for others. To say to men it’s okay not to be violent – that it does not make you less of a man.”

Motsei believes men who abuse should, however, be punished.

The sentences given for violent crimes against women have to be harsh. When a man beats or rapes a woman, it should be seen as a serious crime.

“At the moment men do it because they know they can get away with it. There is no message coming from society saying it’s wrong.

“Violence against women is a development, health and economic problem. Many women do not go to work because of being abused or raped . . . If such problems are not addressed by programmes like the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), women’s empowerment will not happen.”

Motsei says we need a national body to lobby so as to make violence against women a national issue.

“Women cannot suffer in silence anymore. We have a right to safety and security. This means being free from rape, battery or any kind of violence based on our gender.”

Well put, Mmatshilo. ✪



Women cannot suffer in silence anymore. We have a right to safety and security. This means being free from rape, battery or any kind of violence based on our gender.

it’s something they find hard to deal with.”

This is one of the reasons why Adapt was set up. To run workshops on how to identify abuse and offer help. Also, to offer counselling and support to abused women.

Motsei says women need to make their voices heard. They have to stop taking the blame and feeling ashamed.

Violence Act say violence against women is a crime. However, laws alone are not enough. Attitudes have to change. Police, courts, hospitals, clinics, schools and social workers also have to start seeing women abuse as a crime. And, of course, so do the abusers.

“Men have got to take responsibility for their violence. They need to challenge all the lies they have been told about women.

A lesson for life

The National Land Committee women's study tour

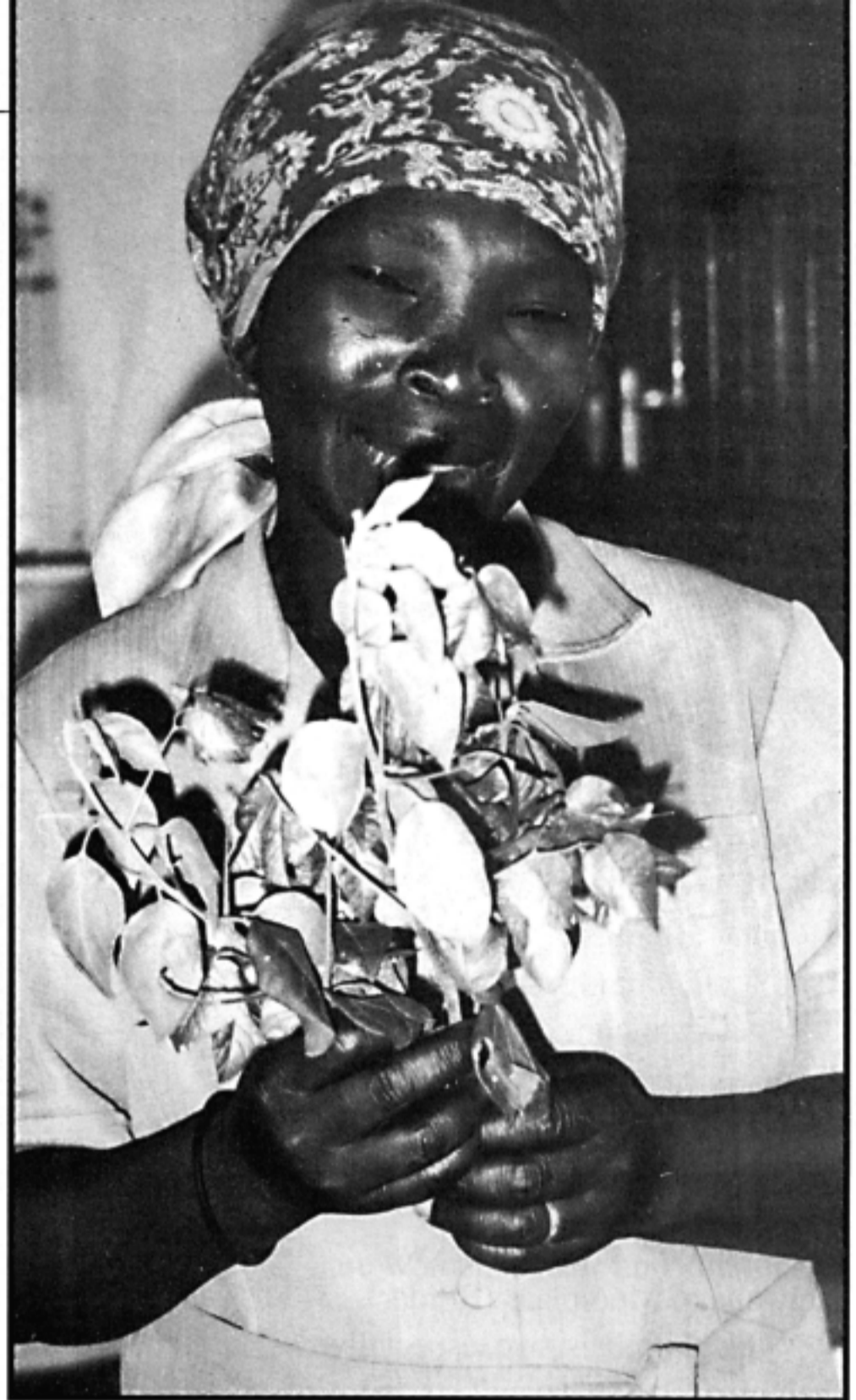
"I learnt about life! I felt so proud seeing women producing things. I am going to tell women in my area about the ideas for projects that I have learnt," said Evah Monyai of Oukasie (Transvaal). Monyai said this after attending the National Land Committee (NLC) women's study tour to development projects.

At the end of August, 46 women from all over South Africa travelled to Natal to visit development projects. It was a week of learning and sharing ideas.

"It was a discoverer's trip. Our group got a warm welcome from the women there. They have a good spirit and are good at motivating each other. The tour taught me that courage and patience are needed to make projects work," said Grace Louw of Pearston in the Eastern Cape.

The women came from communities where NLC affiliates have been working with people struggling over land. There were women from the Transkei, Border, Namaqualand, Cape Town, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. The tour was organised by the NLC's Gender Task Group, to give women the chance to see

Evah Monyai from Oukasie sharing her experience of the tour during an evaluation session



different projects, and to learn about the different approaches to starting development projects.

In most rural areas, there are community services projects (like water and education) and small businesses.

"There are lots of projects in our area, and we need to find out about other projects we could start. We are doing this study tour to find out how other projects are organised and details of how they work," said Lorraine Osborne, chairperson of the newly formed Namaqualand Women's Forum.

For Tholi Hadebe, from the Cornfields community in the Natal Midlands, it was a chance to develop skills for her work on the Land Committee.

"I want to learn many things that I can teach other people here. I want to help develop small busi-

nesses. We are working on developing our area and I want to start projects at Cornfields."

The organisers chose Natal because there are many development projects close to each other. Over the five days, the women visited different projects — the National Association for Women's Empowerment (NAWE), a fish farming project, the Philisisizwe Association for Development, Nhlangwini Development Project, the Bergville Community Centre, the Church Agricultural Project, the Valley Trust and Hlome-likusasa women's organisation.

"There was a good spirit between women in the villages at the NAWE projects — they sang and laughed a lot together. I saw women doing wire fencing. I used to think only men could do fence making, but now I see that women



Participants discuss what they saw during the tour

can do it too," said Nokwakwa Helwana of Mooiplaas (Border).

"I liked Philisisizwe, especially their creches. We haven't started one yet but we are hoping to. I learnt that we shouldn't charge high fees because women will not be able to afford to send their children to our creches," added Gladys Tseki from Botshabelo near Bloemfontein.

"If women stand together, they can do great things. You don't have to be educated to be useful. At every project I was impressed that women took the lead," said Nancy Clark of Port Nolloth, Namaqualand.

"At Mapumula I learnt about the importance of communication. Families got together and collected funds for water. There was also a fence making and gardening project. The funds from these projects were used to build a centre. I feel I can use the things I have learnt here," said Elda Mahlenetle of Milnerton, Cape Town.

"In my area, there is a lot of

depression. People have no education or resources. I thought there was nothing that could be done. I thought we would have to mix with people from the cities to give us ideas. Now I realise you do not need a university degree or diploma. You need determination and confidence. This is what gives people strength.

"I saw illiterate women doing wonders in places where there were no roads, no clinics – nothing," said Florence Mogorosi from Bloemfontein.

Many other delegates agreed with Mogorosi's view about education.

"You don't have to have a good education to succeed in projects. As long as you are prepared to use your hands, you can make a living. Women's illiteracy makes them lack confidence in their ideas. If they could bring themselves forward more, things would be okay. You need patience and tolerance to work on projects,"

agrees Yvonne Tladiyane, an organiser for the Rural Women's Movement in the Transvaal.

The study tour was not spent sitting in meetings. Delegates worked in groups preparing questions. They travelled on buses to different areas where they talked with women, asked questions, and looked at projects. There was active participation throughout the tour. It involved travelling together on buses, evaluating projects and holding discussions.

Joking, singing, laughing, recipe swapping and informal discussions, often until the early hours of the morning, made the tour an exciting experience.

Winnifred Tofu (74) from Mooiplaas, near East London, became the group's temporary mother. She counselled, gave advice, and kept spirits high with a flow of witty comments.

MamTofu told the women to live by a saying she learnt when she was in Std 1:

'One thing at a time and that well done;
Work while you work, play while you play;
That is the way to be cheerful and gay!'

During the evaluation Nonoki Motshari from Bultfontein in the OFS spoke for many delegates when she said, "I would like to say thank you – because we received knowledge. I want to especially thank MamTofu for sharing her experiences and her recipes. I want to thank the organisers and ask MamTofu to always be there as a good example to us."

Here is one of MamTofu's famous recipes:

HAND LOTION

*1 cup of grated body soap
2 cups of lukewarm water
a few drops of food colouring*



Selena Kotsoana, Gladys Tseki and Nandi Motsheu, all from the OFS choose items to illustrate their experience



Tholi Hadebe from Cornfields learning fence making



Mam Tofu (centre) from Mooiplaas joins in the dancing with women from the Hlangwini Development Project

*2 tablespoons of perfume
1 cup of cooking oil
Dissolve soap in water. Use egg beater or fork to mix until smooth. Add oil and beat until there are no lumps. Add perfume and a few drops of colouring.*

Everyone agreed the tour had been a great experience. Friendships made and lessons learnt.

“I learnt that if you have determination, you can reach your goals. Communication is essential, and training in problem solving is needed. I saw that you should not be a leader for yourself, but for the community. You should not feel your education makes you superior. I found in some of the projects we visited, the leaders controlled everything.

“Even at grassroots level there are women leaders and you must encourage them,” said Nora Lebotse of the Rural Women’s Movement in the Transvaal.

The women in the Natal projects were encouraged when they saw people from other regions, who came especially to see what they were doing.

When evaluating the week, delegates chose an object to represent their experience.

Dora Olifant from Nieu Bethesda in the Karoo said: “This palm frond represents this week for me. Each strand is a different day of the week. I am glad that no-one can take this experience away from me. The gaps in between the strands of the leaf represent the gaps in our women’s organisations. I hope we can go home and close those gaps. It is the first time that we have done something like this. I hope the women will go back home and share their experiences. This was a week full of love.” ☀

Story & Pictures NLC

Promises...

How many were kept for Namibian women?

At independence in 1989, Namibian women were made many promises. On the eve of the next election, in early December, Elizabeth Khaxas looks at whether these were met

Promises were made to change the lives of Namibian women, by the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO), when it came into power in 1989. What were the commitments, and have they been met?

The promises

- Full and equal rights
- Paid maternity leave
- Job security, equal pay for equal work, and free childcare facilities provided by the government
- Legislation against sexual harassment at work, minimum quotas for women's participation in decision-making bodies at all levels in trade unions, political parties and government
- A national women's organisation to promote the interests of Namibian women

Were the promises met?

Have women's lives changed in Namibia? Yes, and no.

Equal rights for women are included in our constitution. So is affirmative action. A Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) was established in the Office of the President to promote the advancement of women.

A Women and Law Committee was set up under the National Law Reform and Development Commission. A number of discriminatory laws have already been, or are being changed. Unequal taxation has been stopped. The Roman Dutch Law, under which married women are treated as minors, is also being changed.

Traditional laws which, for example, deny women the right to inherit property, are also under review.

The Labour Code treats both

"Women's needs and problems, and our crucial role in developing our country, are now broadly recognised. However, we still face many problems..."

women and men as breadwinners. It also sets down basic work conditions for farm and domestic workers. The code protects women from unfair dismissal and sexual harassment at work, and provides for three months unpaid maternity leave. The promise of paid maternity leave has not been met.

Social security schemes will be put in place when the Social Security Bill is passed. Maternity leave will be dealt with then.

Free childcare facilities have not been provided. Mothers, many of them single parents, are left to carry this burden.

As far as affirmative action goes, the Local Authorities Act says in local government elections, at least two out of every six candidates must be women. There has therefore been an increase in the number of women councillors and mayors. However, the same was not said in the Regional Authorities Act. Out of the 13 regions in Namibia, not even one is headed by a woman. Less than 10 percent of the regional councillors are women.

Nationally, only two out of 20 government ministers are women. Only six out of 72 members of parliament are women. Sixteen percent of top public servants are women. There is little debate about including more women candidates on party lists for December's national election.

The DWA focuses on programmes which support rural women's development and empowerment.

A national women's organisation has not been formed. An attempt was made to bring existing women's groups together. This led to divisions and mistrust. However, this is being overcome, as government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) pre-



Photo: John Liebenberg

When Namibia won independence, women hoped their conditions would improve. But many promises are still to be met

pare together for the Beijing Women's Conference in 1995.

The government has started to recognise the work of feminist NGOs. For example, in 1990, the DWA still claimed violence against women was a social, not a political, issue.

However, through the work of Women's Solidarity, a Women and Child Abuse Centre was established at Katutura Hospital. Women and children who have

been raped and abused can get protection, legal advice and counselling from specially trained police and medical staff.

Gender training workshops have been held for senior government staff. The University of Namibia is planning to set up a centre for gender research.

The Ministry of Education and Culture is committed to equal

opportunities for girls. It recently launched a 'Culture of Care' campaign to look into youth issues. Teenage pregnancies and the right of girls to finish their education as young mothers are highlighted.

Adult literacy programmes encourage women to participate as district literacy promoters, and to enrol in the courses.

Women's needs and problems, and our crucial role in developing our country, are now broadly recognised.

However, we still face many problems. There's more work ahead for promises to become a reality.

Way forward

At a recent People's Land Conference people stressed the important role women play in agriculture, and their right to own land and take part in decision-making. They said rural women should have the use of machinery to ease their back-breaking work.

Career guidance, vocational training and employment opportunities need to be developed for girls and women. In both rural and urban communities, traditional attitudes which keep women down need to be overcome. Men need training to be responsible fathers.

Reproductive rights for women, abortion, and AIDS, need to be dealt with openly.

Sexual exploitation of women in advertising and pornography has to be tackled. More openness is needed to allow for sex education. There should be room for a lesbian movement to develop.

On the eve of our elections, may we unite as women in our struggle for full human rights, so that promises made, are kept. ☼

● Elizabeth Khaxas is a member of SISTER Namibia Collective, which promotes women's rights through a women's magazine.

Women make their voices heard

Talk a bit deeper and slower and people will listen to you, Fiona Dove (below) was told. It worked! She talks to Rosalee Telela about her time in the union



"There were people who had never met a white comrade and were suspicious of me. I would hear people talking about 'umlungu' behind my back."

However, when people realised that union organiser, Fiona Dove, had also been a shop worker, and understood workers issues, they accepted her.

Dove worked for many years in the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (Ccawusa), which later became the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (Saccawu).

In 1992, Dove became editor of Cosatu's magazine, *The Shopsteward*. Before she left in August this year to study in Holland, she spoke about her experiences in the unions, where she fought especially hard for women workers' rights.

In 1986, Dove joined Ccawusa in Pietermaritzburg. Even though most shop and hotel workers were women, men held the leadership positions in the union. Men's attitudes were a problem, even though Ccawusa was already preaching gender equality, said Dove.

"I was working with young men who didn't like having a woman organiser. They felt I was incapable because I was a woman," said Dove.

Dove went to shops and hotels to encourage workers to join the union. She also organised educa-

tion and training for shopstewards. The aim was to empower shopstewards with negotiating skills.

For Dove, empowerment also meant giving full attention to gender issues. This included teaching male shop stewards "to allow women's leadership to grow, by not dominating all the time".

Shopstewards were also trained to negotiate for maternity leave, something new at the time.

For these issues to be taken seriously, women needed to participate in, and lead unions, said Dove.

"Unfortunately, women often did not raise issues which affected them. They did not think of sexual harassment as a union issue. Women felt intimidated by men at union meetings and would often not attend them."

Despite being in the majority, women mostly voted men into leadership positions.

One shop Dove organised had five women and one man worker.

"The women were very powerful. The man was much younger and not interested in the union. One day, they had to elect a shopsteward. The women turned and pointed at him. They said none of them had the time to be shopstewards."

Meetings were held between five and seven on Thursday evenings.

"These times were inconvenient for women who had to fetch their children from creche or school."



**SACCAWU MEMBERS:
Even though the union's
members were mostly
women, men occupied the
leadership positions**

Photos: William Matlala IMG

Harassment was another problem: "Often the women would be stopped from going to meetings by husbands and boyfriends."

When women did go, their contributions were ignored.

"You would say something and everyone would ignore you. Later a man would say the same thing and everyone would say: 'What a brilliant idea!'"

Dove found a strange way around this.

"One guy said to me, 'You must lower the tone of your voice. Talk a bit deeper and slower, and people will listen to you.' It worked! Men seemed not to hear a women's voice."

From about 1989, attitudes were slowly changing, said Dove.

She and other organisers tried to make it possible for women to be active in the union.

"We started having meetings on Saturday afternoons so women could bring their children and partners."

It was, however, not easy empowering women without men interfering.

"You'd find men at a women workers' conference as leaders of a delegation. They said the women needed their help.

"But there were other men who were different. One man said he was there to learn from the women so he could go back and explain to other men what problems women had."

Gains have, over time, been made. Pick 'n Pay and Clicks workers, through their union, spearheaded and won the battle for maternity rights in the mid 1980's. Not all women workers in South Africa have, however, benefitted from this victory.

"There is no law which secures jobs for women who are pregnant. However, if a woman is fired because she is pregnant, she can take the employer to the industrial court. The employer would not win."

Other achievements include the setting up of gender forums within unions to address women's and gender issues. Today, Cosatu has gender forums in all the regions.

A new labour relations law will be passed in 1995. Dove

believes women workers need to organise to fight for changes in the law.

"There are many things in the labour legislation which could be challenged immediately. Child care is one of them. The government and corporations need to be pushed to take responsibility for child care resources."

Dove says women should fight for employment opportunities and access to training and promotion. Employment policies must include affirmative action programmes. Programmes should have quotas for women to be included in training and promotion. Women often do the same jobs as men, but they are not graded equally. Women have to organise around these issues.

The Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) has taken affirmative action for women very seriously.

"CWIU came up with a radical policy that in all chemical factories, 50 percent of jobs must be held by women," says Dove.

This gives Dove hope: As long as women participate in unions, and organise as women, they will win the battle for their rights. ✪

Building union women

Another Cosatu congress goes by with resolutions on women's participation and leadership in the unions. There is clearly a lot of work still to be done. By Deanne Collins, editor of the *Shopsteward*

Women make up 36 percent of the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions' (Cosatu) membership. Only eight percent of its national and regional executive committee members are women.

This does not include the domestic workers union, Sadwu, where women are in the majority.

Apart from Sadwu, all the other unions' general secretaries and presidents are men. Five out of six of the Cosatu national office-bearers are men. There has never been a woman Cosatu regional chairperson.

It is not only in Cosatu that you find a lack of women in leadership. Women are under-represented in many areas of our society, especially where power and decision-making is concerned. However, Cosatu has committed itself many times to address gender inequality.

Resolutions have been passed. Some progress has been made, but it seems women still have a long way to turn resolutions into reality.

Most delegates to the fifth Cosatu congress held in September

1994 were men. Very few women took part in debates. It was only when the issue of gender came up that women's voices were really heard!

One of the issues debated at the congress was whether or not Cosatu and its unions should have a quota system. This means a number of leadership positions would be set aside for women.

The Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) proposed that by 1996, at least one woman should serve in each of the national and regional executive committees. That women must also be represented in all major sub-committees and negotiating teams. CWIU also said delegations to Cosatu congresses and other decision-making structures like the Central Executive Committee (CEC) must include men and women.

This proposal led to heated debate.

The South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (Sactwu) argued strongly that women must stand for positions and be elected

on merit. This position was supported by the South African Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu) and the Paper, Printing and Allied Workers Union (Ppwawu).

A delegate from the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) reminded the congress that bosses use the same argument when workers demand affirmative action. The National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) also supported the quota system to address gender inequality.

Building women

In the end, the quota system was not accepted by the congress. Instead, a resolution was passed which concentrated on building women's participation and leadership within the federation.

Congress decided:

- To develop and extend special training programmes for women shop stewards, staff members and leaders;
- To include gender in all education programmes;
- That Cosatu's CEC will monitor this programme;
- Cosatu's research institute must conduct a study on the position of women in all unions. Obstacles women workers face, such as lack of child care facilities, must be examined;
- Advertisements for positions must state a preference for women. Although merit will be taken into account, training programmes should also be provided to enable women to take up senior positions and;
- Women's structures within the federation must be strengthened.

The struggle for women workers continues. We need each other's support to make this work. ✪

Cosatu's research department, the National Labour and Economic Development Institute (Naledi), has found that nationally and regionally within Cosatu, only 13% of leaders are women. If the South African Domestic Workers Union's leadership is not included, as all of their leadership is women, only 8% of Cosatu's national and regional leadership is women.



Through women's eyes

Media can play a very important role in promoting gender issues. Women journalists from Africa recently met to discuss how. Mpine Qakisa was there

To bring about change (in society), we need to create awareness around gender ... as an important part of development.

This was the view of women journalists from 13 African countries who attended a week-long seminar in Kitwe, Zambia recently. The theme of the seminar was 'Through the lens of gender'.

It helped prepare women journalists to report on the African

women's conference in Dakar, Senegal in November this year, as well as the worldwide 'Equality, Development and Peace' conference in Beijing in September in 1995.

Both are organised by the United Nations. The purpose of the conferences is to work on a programme of action, and to come up with strategies for women to put pressure on their governments and other organisations around women's rights and needs.

The topic of the Kitwe seminar led to much discussion and debate. "The focus on gender enables you to look at women in relation to men, and the way these relationships are determined by society," said Elsie Alexander,

from Botswana.

The participants agreed that focusing on gender allowed for women's issues to be highlighted, while not excluding men.

Alexander felt strongly about sexism in the workplace.

"This is something the media must begin to address more seriously," she said.

Her views were shared by a participant from Sudan, who added: "In some African countries women are still regarded as less important human beings. Even in a court of law, the evidence of a woman is regarded as half-truth."

Many saw training as part of the solution to raise awareness around gender equality.

"Gender training in the media is important if we want to make sure organisations are successful in making gender issues part of their plans, policies and programmes," said Alexander, who added that the media must play a watchdog role.

Edda Sengah from Tanzania said the media is failing to change society's attitudes on gender equality because "newsrooms and radio stations are full of insensitive men.

"Unfortunately, these men occupy most of the decision-making positions. That's why we must start with the bosses in our campaign to make men and the media more gender sensitive."

The seminar was a training ground for women journalists to take up the sexist attitudes not only at work, but also in society. More gender training workshops will follow. Meetings with editors are planned.

There is hope that, through these efforts, everyone will begin to see things 'through the lens of gender'. ★



For many years, families in South Africa have been torn apart. Here a woman rushes to save her belongings before bulldozers move in to Bloekombas squatter camp in 1990

Time to heal families torn apart

The United Nations declared 1994 International Year of the Family, but South Africa has very little to celebrate, writes Lakela Kaunda.

Thousands of people, mostly Africans, have not had a normal family life for decades in South Africa. Violence, poverty, homelessness and apartheid have torn families apart. These are just some of the reasons many families in this country will not celebrate the International Year of

the Family.

Pietermaritzburg National Children's Rights Committee member, and mother, Thembi Ngcobo, says black people never really had proper family life.

"For years children grew up hardly seeing their parents. In rural areas, fathers work far from home and rarely see their children.

"The mother would be a domestic worker living with her employers who did not want children on the premises. The children are brought up by grandmothers or relatives."

Some frustrated parents and children turn to alcohol and drugs. This makes family relations even more strained.

Ngcobo hopes political changes will bring about opportunities for proper family life.

"The government cannot talk of reconciliation if this does not start within families."

Ngcobo is worried the focus at the moment seems to be the development of urban areas.

"We need the government to embark on a policy to bring work closer to people, particularly in rural areas."

Men neglect their parental responsibilities, says Ngcobo, and this affects what kind of adults children grow up to be. Men have to share in bringing up the children, especially where families have broken up, or parents were never married.

Single mothers often have a tough time trying to get fathers to give financial support.

"Men just refuse to pay maintenance. When a summons is sent out, you are told he could not be found at his workplace. There is never much follow up.

"Men also need to be taught that responsibility to children is not only financial ... No matter how much the mother does, there is always a need for fathers. If fathers do not return the love, it leads to hatred."

Political violence on the East Rand, KwaZulu Natal and other parts of the country, has torn families apart. Children have sometimes been made to choose which parent to support, because of their different political beliefs.

Children also turned against each other because of this. Other families lost contact when they fled political violence.

Many children still roam the streets begging and sleeping in the open in Natal. They don't know where their parents are, and no-one is helping to find them.

Local communities do not

show much support to organisations which work with street children. Even families that did not break apart have problems.

Breadwinners lost jobs during the violence. Families became homeless when their houses were burnt, or they fled to save their lives.

Ngcobo feels the government should get actively involved in rebuilding communities.

"The government should find out what they need and help them meet those needs. It should also support non-governmental organisations working to solve problems caused by violence," she said.



"A number of children missed school because of the war. Now they are too old to return to class fulltime. The government should start skills training programmes for them."

She says housing and public works programmes could help.

"Thousands of people who live in shacks can be taught to build their own homes through co-operatives. This would help a lot of people, especially those made homeless by violence," she said.

Ngcobo also feels there should be programmes to encourage a culture of learning, teaching and

reconciliation in schools.

"Teachers and pupils in previously violence-torn areas are battling. You find a child who killed a classmate returning to the same school. This is traumatic for other children. We need counsellors in schools to help these children."

Ngcobo says although AIDS is one of the biggest threats to families today, not much is being done to educate children.

Children need to be taught that love and sex are two different things.

"My worry is that AIDS messages come only through newspa-

A lot of work needs to be done to build families where children can grow up showered with love and care by both parents . . .

pers and television. The messages should be taken to communities, through public meetings and other gatherings."

Wife battering, child abuse, alcohol and drug abuse are other problems breaking up families.

A lot of work needs to be done to build families where children can grow up showered with love and care by both parents. We need violent-free homes and safe neighbourhoods with proper facilities and schools.

Only then can we start talking about family life. ☉

What's in a name

Times are changing, and so are names. Married women are choosing, for different reasons, either to keep their own family names, take on their husbands' surnames, or use both. By *Thenjiwe Nhlapo*

A few years ago it was fashionable to be a married woman. The wedding ring and your husband's surname meant society treated you differently from 'unmarried sisters'. This is still the case, but today some married women want to keep their surnames — or double-barrel them with their husbands'.

I wanted to know why, and spoke to several women about it.

"The surname I grew up with is the one I know, love and feel close to. I did not change it when I got married because it was not an issue," says Sithara Narsee.

Although Narsee's in-laws were disappointed when she did not carry their family name, they accepted it.

Other people, however, found it strange.

"My colleagues insisted when you get married, you take your husband's surname. No matter how I tried to explain, they simply refused to accept my views."

They joke behind her back, and call her husband 'Mr Narsee'.

"They made me feel I was destroying Indian culture, and that I was bossy in my marriage. I do not get upset about it. I under-

stand. We live in a sexist society, which does not regard women as equal to men."

Member of Parliament and women's activist, Baleka Kgotsitsile, changed her surname when she got married.

"Taking on your husband's surname was not questioned then. It was an accepted thing. I do not see myself as an extension of someone else. I resent it when others do. I want to be judged on my own achievement, not because I'm someone's wife," she insists.

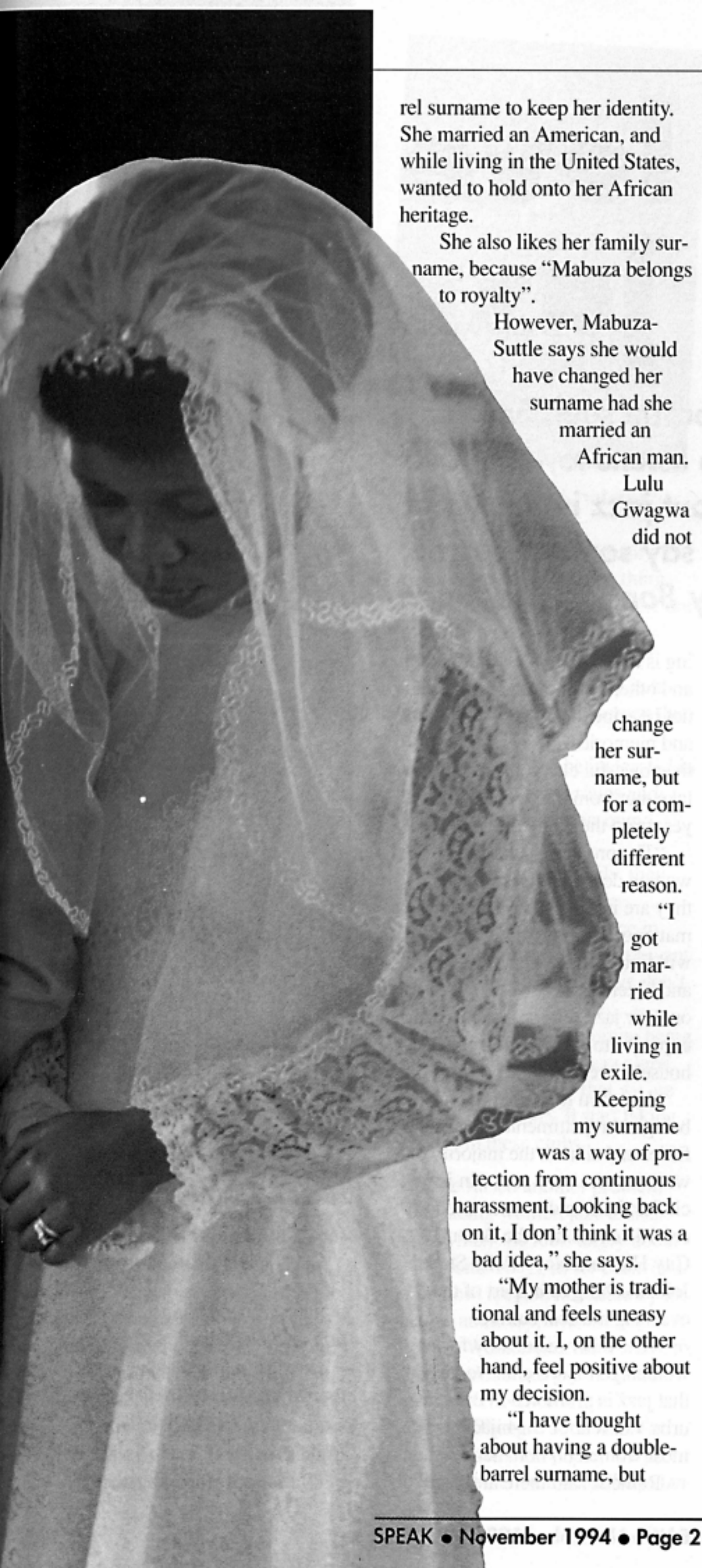
Kgotsitsile says if she had to do it over again, she would keep her family surname.

She also asks why a woman's title changes from 'Miss' to 'Mrs' when she marries. A man remains 'Mr' from birth to death, whether married or not.

Television personality, Felicia Mabuza-Suttle, has a double-bar-



Photo: Cedric Nunn



rel surname to keep her identity. She married an American, and while living in the United States, wanted to hold onto her African heritage.

She also likes her family surname, because "Mabuza belongs to royalty".

However, Mabuza-Suttle says she would have changed her surname had she married an African man.

Lulu Gwagwa did not

change her surname, but for a completely different reason.

"I got married while living in exile.

Keeping my surname was a way of protection from continuous harassment. Looking back on it, I don't think it was a bad idea," she says.

"My mother is traditional and feels uneasy about it. I, on the other hand, feel positive about my decision.

"I have thought about having a double-barrel surname, but

found it too long," she laughs.

Piyushi Kotecha feels keeping her surname is a way to maintaining her independence.

"I have always been very independent, even as a child. My identity is very important to me. My husband and I have an equal relationship, so my independence is not an obstacle."

Kotecha has run into some problems, though.

"When we get invitations, they are sometimes addressed to 'Mr and Mrs Robb'. People take it for granted that it is okay to use my husband's surname.

"My three-year-old son asked me what my surname is. When I told him, he said 'so then my surname should be Kotecha-Robb'."

"It amazed me that he, as a child, saw nothing wrong with having both surnames," adds Kotecha.

Although most of the men in these relationships don't have any problems with their partners' choice, the same cannot always be said for their families, friends and colleagues. Women who keep their surnames often run into problems with official documents, officials and in business dealings. Try explaining to a bank official for the hundredth time why your surname is not the same as your husband's! Some women end up giving in and changing their surnames.

Society needs to change its attitude towards women. Women want to be treated as adults and be left to run their lives the way they want. They don't need another battle on their hands.

It is encouraging, though, that the new government is committed to gender equality. Let's hope society takes note. After all, it's your right to choose your identity. ☪

In love with jazz

Jazz. Food for the soul. Spiritual. Healing. Who listens to, and talks lovingly about jazz in this way? Not women, say some. Not true, say others. By Bongani Madondo

Lovers of jazz can talk all night about its wonderful powers. Many, though, say jazz is more for men than women. Thinking of the jazz clubs, musicians, festivals, buyers and listeners of jazz records and CD's, do women or men come first to mind? Mostly men?

Jazz singer Dolly Rathebe, radio DJ Shado Twala, journalist Ruth Bhengu and Lena "Horne" Dichabeng, all had much to say about women and jazz.

Dolly Rathebe, lead vocalist of the Elite Swingsters from way back in the sixties, said women were, and still are, very much into jazz.

"There is no woman who didn't grow up listening to jazz," she said. "For those of us who are products of Kofifi (Sophiatown), Alexander, Lady Selbourne and Marabastad and all other demolished places, jazz was almost staple food.

"Even today, you can see grandmothers harmoniously humming when an Ella Fitzgerald or Satchmo is played. What is excit-

ing is that real music, jazz-marabi and other kinds of this music, cannot be wiped from people's hearts and memories. No-one, not even the powerful electronic media, can take that from the people. And yes, from the women in particular.

"The problem is not that women don't like jazz. In fact, they are in love with jazz. It is a matter of family structure. You will find men leaving their wives and sisters behind when they go on their jazz sessions. Women are expected to be at home doing all household chores.

"Hey, I'm not lamenting or being over-sentimental, but in the fifties and sixties, the majority of women were very active in jazz circles. Men and women used to crowd venues like the Bantu Men City Hall and No. 5 Polly Street, Johannesburg to be part of the evolving musical culture.

"The other factor why fewer women go to jazz clubs today is that jazz is promoted in the suburbs. For fear of car-hijackers, most women do not attend."

Rathebe said there are many



Dolly Rathebe doing the 'bump jive'

women who are, in fact, "walking jazz encyclopedias".

Next stop found the writer at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), talking to Radio Metro DJ Shado Twala.

"Jazz puts people together,



Photos: Learn & Teach

"Men see jazz as something that belongs to them, that they 'own' it, whereas women take a more 'relaxed' approach..."

people from all walks of life, people across the class and gender line. Intellectuals, artists, technologists, you name them — jazz is for all those people.”

Twala believes however, that women and men react differently to jazz. She says men see jazz as something that belongs to them, that they “own” it, whereas

women take a more “relaxed” approach.

“Men are so unnecessarily over-competitive in everything. That is why people think there are more men jazz lovers than women. This is not the case.”

Twala says her Sunday jazz programme has more women than men listeners.

Should women be integrated in the traditional jazz groups and jazz clubs or form their own groups?

No, said Twala, firmly, they should form their own.

“We need no acceptance in men’s jazz groups. We don’t want to be integrated because we don’t have to be.

“If we talk about women being integrated into men’s jazz clubs, men will soon forget that we are ourselves and they’ll start taking control in these clubs.”

She raised another problem facing women jazz artists, which she feels angry about.

“Women have never been, and, right now, are not, marketed by the people at the top, who are obviously men. Women jazz artists have to struggle double to get the same recognition as men artists.”

Ruth Bhengu, a journalist at the Sowetan newspaper, is a jazz lover and member of the Sowetan

Jazz Syndicate. However, she doesn’t believe women are into jazz in a big way. She says jazz groups are useful for women in another way.

“Although most women are not into jazz, many understand that their husbands do the township jazz interchange/ visits/ gatherings. That means the groups play their records at one member’s place today and at the other’s next week. This makes it easier for women to know their men’s whereabouts.”

She added if both partners are jazz lovers it is easier for them to understand each other.

“Jazz is healing music and has no room for unwanted arguments and fights.”

Bhengu loves John Coltrane and Nina Simone’s music.

“Jazz is like poetry,” she said. “It speaks of black people’s history throughout the world.”

On the last kilometre of this ‘women and jazz’ journey, the writer landed at Lena “Home” Dichabeng’s joint in Rockville, Soweto.

“Satchmo. Oh, Glen Miller! Those were the greatest to me! Nina Simone, Manhattans (local).”

Looking and sounding strong for her age, Dichabeng said she preferred American jazz to our (African) brand of jazz.

“Those people over there were committed to their art,” she said. “Tell the people out there that women have been, and still are, into jazz. We will witness an overflow of women in jazz,” she said.

Take note, brothers. Seems like you’ll have to do your share of the dishes so the sisters can have their share of the soul food. ♣

Affirmative action

How can women benefit?

The words "affirmative action" are used almost as often as "in the new South Africa." Perhaps because you can't have the one without the other. How will affirmative action change the lives of women? by Shafika Isaacs

"We need affirmative action," say many people, "if we are really going to build a new South Africa."

Hearing this usually sends shivers of fear down the spines of those who benefitted most from the old South Africa.

It gives rays of hope, however, to black people and women, that they may, at last, get some decent opportunities.

The government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) says:

"Affirmative action must be used to end discrimination on the grounds of race and gender, and to address the disparity of power between workers and management and between urban and rural areas."

Something has to be done to deal with inequalities caused by apartheid. In the case of companies, steps should be taken to create more equality in the workplace. This means more opportunities for black people and women. However, affirmative action means different things to different people.

For some, it means reverse discrimination. Some white men

fear they will lose their jobs to black people and women.

Others see affirmative action as creating management positions for black people and women.

Some believe affirmative action is about empowerment, particularly women's empowerment, in the workplace.

If a proper job around affirmative action for women in the workplace is to be done, we first have to find out about women's problems in the economy.

The 'workplace,' for women, is the home. It is also the street, for self-employed women, and those who work in the informal sector. It is the land, for those who live and work in rural areas.

Women's work, and these workplaces, are not taken seriously. Or even seen as proper work. For many, their work offers no legal protection or economic security.

Other problems faced by women in the economy include:

- Unequal pay. In some companies and industries, women who do the same job as men still earn less than the men;
- Women are mostly employed in low paying jobs. In education, for example, women teachers are

employed in the lower paying job grades and very few are in top positions;

- Women are employed mainly in jobs seen as "women's work," like nursing, cleaning and domestic work;
- In most homes, women are the ones who do all the work. They do childcare, cleaning, cooking and other domestic chores;
- Many working women still do not get enough, or any, maternity benefits and other parental rights;
- Women often face sexual harassment.

The reasons why women are expected to put up with all of this, both at home and in the workplace, are many. It is not just because of the set-up at the work or in the economy. It is also because of social and cultural factors. It adds up to gender discrimination against women in all spheres of life.

Affirmative action has to take all of this into account.

How can affirmative action programmes do this? What action can women take?

One thing is for sure: it will be a big struggle to make affirmative action programmes address gender discrimination.

A white woman manager of a big company, even asked: "What has it (affirmative action) got to do with women?"

Affirmative action has everything to do with women, and with other groups of people who have been disadvantaged in the past.



"The lifting of apartheid laws will not in itself overcome the effects of the economic disempowerment of black people and women. Hence the need for affirmative action programmes."
South African Labour Bulletin, September 1994.

Photo: William Matlala

The RDP has suggestions around affirmative action and women. It includes laws, principles, protection, security, facilities and education programmes, which help to get rid of the things which stand in the way of women's advancement.

The RDP suggests we need to have laws which:

- Promote affirmative action programmes, as well as ways of making sure these take place;
- Prohibit sexual harassment. This would include having pro-

grammes which educate employers and workers about sexual harassment;

- Establish principles for the hiring, and promotion of workers who have similar skills and qualifications. This will help prevent discrimination against people who were disadvantaged by apartheid and sexism;
- Provide job security for pregnant women, and promote the provision of childcare, to further enable women's equality in employment opportunities;

- Have programmes of education, training, retraining, basic adult education and recognition and acceptance of prior learning.

When the above are introduced, the position of working women is bound to improve. The experience of other countries with equal opportunities, or affirmative action laws, shows however, that it is important to have laws which protect women against discrimination, but this alone is not enough.

We need active campaigning by men and women in the workplace, communities, women's organisations, and trade unions. Gender sensitive members of parliament must push hard for laws and programmes which will help women in their fight for equality. This will best guarantee results in the fight against women's oppression. ✪

● *Shafika Isaacs is a researcher at the Trade Union Research Project in Durban.*

You and the Bill of Rights

Great news! We have a Bill of Rights in South Africa. How to claim these rights? *Cathi Albertyn* explains

Each person in South Africa is now guaranteed fundamental human rights. These are written down in our Bill of Rights, which is part of the new Constitution. What does this mean for women?

What are fundamental human rights?

Fundamental human rights are those basic rights we are entitled to as human beings. The government has to respect these basic rights. It should not violate them. For example, the government cannot pass a law which infringes our fundamental human rights. If it does, you can take the government to court to have that law removed.

Our bill of rights contains more than twenty-five human rights. Some of these rights may seem quite difficult to pin down. For example, you are entitled to equality, dignity, freedom and security.

Other rights are easier to

understand, such as freedom of religion and belief, or freedom of expression.

A few rights are very clear. For example, children have the right to basic nutrition, and basic health and social services.

It is important for all of us to get to know these rights.

Are there any limitations on human rights?

An important question is whether human rights can be limited. For example, a commitment to unlimited freedom of expression allows both racist and sexist speech.

In some countries, governments have passed laws which prohibit extreme forms of racist speech and pornography. This, obviously, limits the right to freedom of expression.

However, it is seen to be the right thing to do, because such speech is harmful to some groups of people in society.



Our bill of rights allows for human rights to be limited only where it is reasonable to do so, in a democratic society based on freedom and equality.

If we want to ban racist speech, we have to explain how, by doing so, democracy, freedom and equality in our country will be promoted.

Are "women's rights" different to human rights?

No. The call for women's rights is a call to accept that human rights must include the needs and interests of women, as well as men.



For example, for a long time, violence against women was not seen as a violation of human rights. Women fought this for years. At last, because of it, the United Nations is beginning to accept that violence against women is a human rights issue.

Does the bill of rights apply to landlords or employers?

Human rights have traditionally been about the relationship between the individual, you, and the government. This means you can insist that the government respects human rights in all it does.

At present you will not be able to use the bill of rights to challenge any discrimination that you experience from people known as 'private persons', like your landlord or employer.

However, the government will soon pass a law which will prohibit discrimination by such private persons and institutions. This will give you a way of challenging such discrimination.

How can you use the bill of rights to improve your life?

The bill of rights is worth nothing unless you know how to use it.

We can organise to persuade parliament to make laws which further our human rights. For example, women can organise to insist that parliament makes laws to protect women from being fired when they become pregnant. Such a law would advance women's right to equality.

You can also challenge any violation of your human rights by the government, by going to court. The Constitutional Court is the most important place for doing this.

It is the only court which can remove laws which conflict with the bill of rights. However, you can raise human rights questions in any court.

You can insist that all judges and magistrates take human rights into account in applying the law in any case, whether it is a criminal case, a divorce, or a claim for payment of a debt. Already, the courts have given accused people stronger rights to bail because of the bill of rights. The bill of rights has also been used to outlaw the imprisonment of people who owe money.

Do you have to use the courts to fight for human rights?

Many people cannot go to court because it is expensive. The constitution allows for the setting up of a Human Rights Commission, which will investigate complaints about human rights. This will most likely be set up later this year. It will then not cost a lot to challenge violations of your rights.

Now, more than ever, is the time to start organising to further women's rights!

● *Cathi Albertyn is a lawyer working at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies in Johannesburg.*

Who will care for the Aids-ill?

There are already South Africans who are sick and dying of AIDS. There will be millions more in years to come. How will they be cared for? By Rosalee Telela

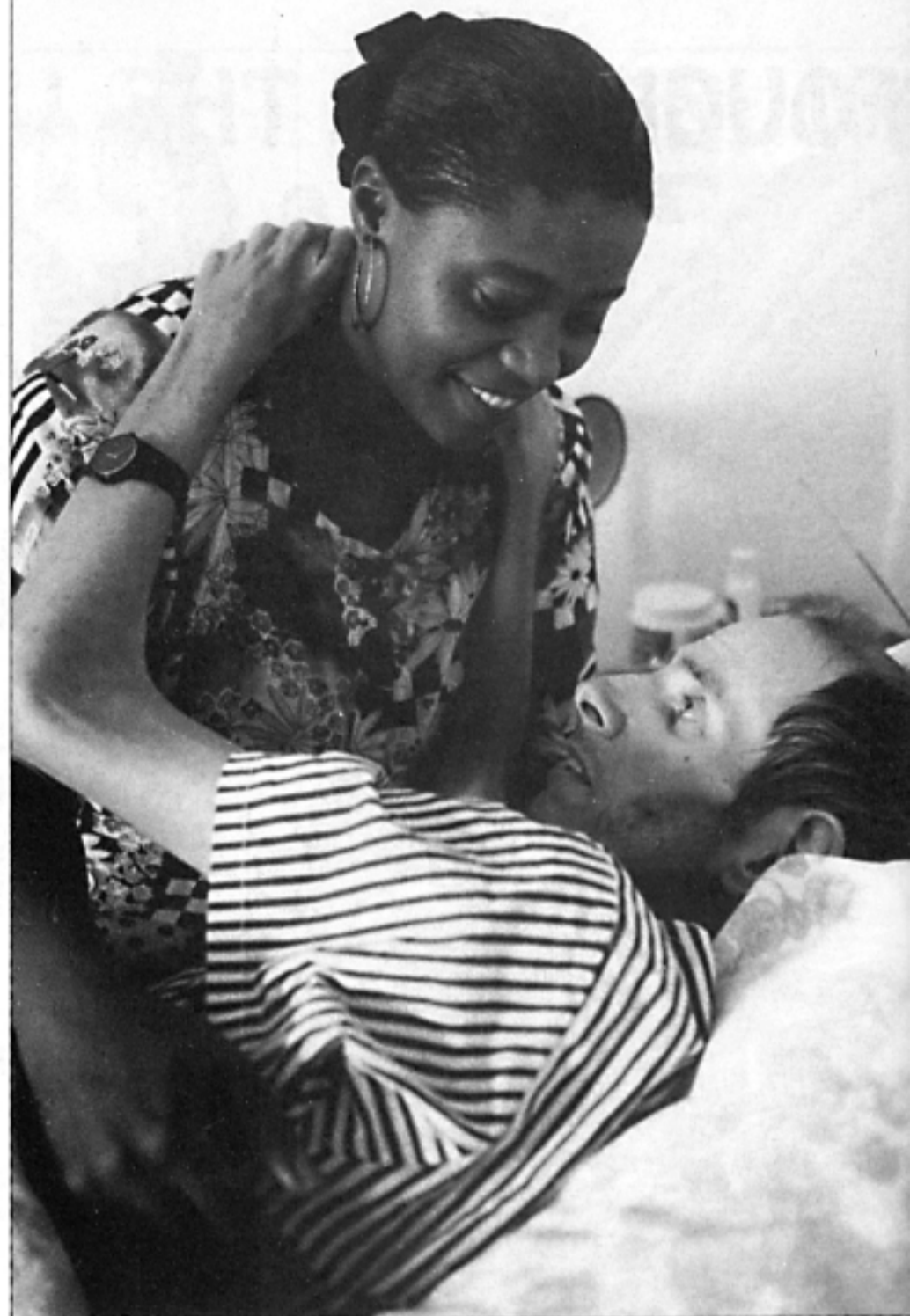


Photo: Gisele Wulfsohn

By the middle of last year over eight million adults in sub-Saharan Africa were HIV positive, says the World Health Organisation. More than 1.5 million were sick with full-blown AIDS.

In South Africa, more than 27 percent of the people will be HIV positive by the year 2010.

Mary Crewe, manager of the Community AIDS Information and Support Centre, said there is a national plan on how to care for people with HIV and AIDS. However, for the plan to work, money, resources, people, and a change of attitude is needed.

The National AIDS Plan was developed through the National Aids Co-ordinating Committee of South Africa (Nacosa).

Nacosa is made up of organi-

sations concerned about HIV/AIDS, and includes the government.

The health system will not be able to cope with all those ill from AIDS. Extra money and resources will have to be put into health services, especially the hospitals.

Affected individuals, their families and communities need support, said Crewe.

To care for and treat people with AIDS you need trained health care staff.

“People with HIV/AIDS and their families need counselling and education about prevention and care.”

Most patients want to be cared for at home. Families often bear the burden, and need assistance.

“Families should get educa-

tion, counselling, nursing advice and training. Disability grants, equipment, food parcels and transport should be provided to the family. Health workers should also assist, by visiting the home,” explained Crewe.

The problem with home-based care is that the responsibility almost always falls on women’s shoulders.

Crewe warned: “Already over half of those who are HIV-positive are women. This means 50 percent of the carers are infected. We need to change the attitude that it should not only be women who care for the sick. It should be the responsibility of the whole family.”

One of the best ways to get everyone involved, is to include care as part of AIDS education in



hospice care, homes for the disabled, day care centres and hospitals. These are mostly run by local non-governmental organisations (NGO's) and religious groups.

Crewe believes these should receive money from the government and be supported by local authorities through rent and rates reductions.

She said hospitals will still be responsible for patients.

"Patients with HIV and AIDS should not be put on their own and treated differently, unless it is in the health interest of the person. This also applies to HIV-positive mothers after they have delivered their babies.

Private health services also have a responsibility.

"All private doctors, dentists, social workers and psychologists need to have information about treatment and care of HIV/AIDS. They need to be informed of services available for their patients.

"They have no right to refuse someone treatment if they are HIV positive."

In Africa, many people who are HIV positive, have Tuberculosis (TB). Crewe believes the health services for TB should be improved. She said health workers dealing with TB and AIDS should work together with other primary health care services. The HIV virus gets passed on more easily in people who have Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's).

For Crewe, this means all STD services should have fully developed programmes which include education about HIV/AIDS. "Condom distribution, information and treatment of STD's needs to be improved."

Women who are infected with HIV and get pregnant can pass it on to their unborn children.

"The rights of these children as well as their parents need to be respected and protected.

"The right of a woman to choose to have an abortion because she is infected with HIV, must be respected. In the end, this must be her decision," said Crewe.

It is important to start thinking and planning around care for those with AIDS. However, resources should also be put into explaining to people how not to get, or pass on, the HIV virus. There is, after all, no cure for AIDS. ★

schools. We also need to challenge the way people see those who have AIDS.

"It is important that communities in which people receive home-based care are supportive.

"Otherwise a simple thing like going to a shop could become a problem. You may find that a shop keeper who knows you are caring for a person with AIDS will refuse to even speak to you," said Crewe.

Community groups already involved in support work also need assistance.

"Other groups working with individuals and families need training, basic drugs and equipment."

For those who do not have family to support them, there's

The PPHC National AIDS Programme helps communities fight ignorance about AIDS. If you need the support of a community worker or if you have any further questions contact the PPHC National AIDS Programme. The telephone numbers of their offices are:

National office: (011) 403 4647
Eastern Transvaal: (01315) 41 181
Northern Transvaal: (01521) 91 4221
Southern Transvaal: (011) 337 7126
Orange Free State: (057) 396 5509
Natal: (031) 301 2582
Natal Midlands: (0331) 45 0453
Northern Natal: (0354) 74 181
Border: (0431) 43 6733
Eastern Cape: (041) 41 1618
Transkei: (0471) 31 0757
Western Cape: (021) 696 4154



These pages have been made possible by NPPHCN National AIDS Programme

My turn now

Vuyiswa was crying out of anger, sadness and fear. Her tears melted into a cloth, thoughts running into each other. Her husband had left the house in a rage, slamming the door.

Vuyiswa's mind was ablaze with mixed feelings: hurt, anger, jealousy. Was she wrong to demand the things she did? Was she just one crazy woman, alone in this world, fighting this man she hated and loved?

And waves of arguments over the past days, months and years swept through her mind. So did the sweet times. Yes, those days and evenings of discussions, laughter, and love.

They had met at school, both frustrated at the bantu education they were expected to swallow. Both sure they were going to fight to change things. Thabo had agreed with her when she got angry with her parents for not letting her go to student meetings. They said she had things to do at home — young ones to care for, meals to cook. Together they had worked out ways to explain to her parents how important those meetings were. How important freedom was for them all.

They had married. Thabo had gone to study at night school. They agreed on this because of the babies — they demanded so much from Vuyiswa. Later, it would be her turn to study. She worked to support his studying, keep them all healthy, clean, fed and loved.

Somehow, her turn to study never came. Thabo's studies



never ended.

And her bright and questioning mind that craved for freedom became dull with questions about childcare and food. Thabo was still busy fighting for freedom - attending meetings, and giving talks.

Over the past few months, Vuyiswa felt she could no longer stand it. It was her turn to study, to develop, to grow. Thabo had trapped her, in the home, and she had allowed this to happen. Now, how different was her home to her parents', against which he had helped her fight? He wouldn't see it. For him it meant giving up some of his life in the outside world.

Vuyiswa's world was getting smaller. Thabo's was growing

larger. Why, she hadn't been able to get to her union meeting on the weekend because his meeting at the same time was 'more important'.

Vuyiswa turned to look at her sleeping children. Tiny faces, peaceful in sleep, reflecting the bond between them — mixtures of her and him and themselves. She knew she had to carry on with her fight. For them and for herself. For the present and the future. The importance of the task that lay ahead filled her with determination.

Vuyiswa kissed her children gently, smiled at her wedding photograph hanging on the wall. She looked for and found a pen in her bag, and unfolded her application forms for night school. ☺

HEALTH BRIEFS

Unfair treatment

A report from top British doctors has found that women often get a lower standard of treatment for heart disease than men. The report found that women are less likely to survive a heart attack than men because doctors do not detect their illness. They don't give women proper medicine to control the disease.

The Heart Foundation of South Africa says some women have told them of their frustrations, but there has been no research on the issue in this country. Though most heart doctors deny treating men differently than women, the Foundation believes that South African

women with heart disease face the same sort of discrimination.

Children who smoke

Parents who want to prevent their children from smoking should start discouraging them from an early age.

The American Heart Association says children can become addicted to cigarettes by the time they are nine years old.

A US surgeon-general's

report early this year said smoking is a major problem among teenagers. The report estimated that 3,1 million children in the US aged between 12 and 18 smoke cigarettes.

What is child abuse

Child abuse is when someone hurts a child on purpose.

A person is abusing a child if he or she:

- Makes a child feel stupid;
- Teases a child too much;
- Speaks to a child in a rude way or shouts at her or him;
- Leaves a child alone with nobody to look after her or him;
- Hurts or hits a child too hard;
- Sexually abuses the child.

The importance of exercising

Exercise, as people know, but often forget, makes you stronger. It also makes you deal with stress and demands of everyday life better. Regular exercise helps you relax and sleep well.

This does not mean it is necessary to rush out and buy running shoes or join a gym. There are many ways of exercising.

Take the stairs instead of a lift. Walk to work or the shop (if it's safe), rather than taking a taxi.

When you have time, take up a sport which you enjoy and can do in your own time.

More and more people are reading

Challenge

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Photo: Southlight

Watch out for this virus

Hepatitis B is a serious and growing problem in South Africa. Out of a population of 41 million, two million people are infected.

This disease, experts say, is a hundred times more infectious than HIV, the virus which causes AIDS

What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B (HBV) is a viral infection which attacks the liver. It is closely linked to liver cancer and may result in death. HBV spreads quickly and easily. Most people do not know they are infected, or that they are passing on the HBV to others, because they do not show signs of being ill. Or doctors may not have picked up that their patients have the disease.

Eighty-five percent of people infected with HBV will recover fully. The rest become 'carriers', and go on to infect others without knowing it. People who suffer badly from Hepatitis B may well develop liver cancer and will eventually die.

How do you get Hepatitis B?

HBV is spread from person to



person through body fluids. Blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and possibly saliva, sweat and tears all carry the virus. You can become infected if you have cuts or breaks in skin and you come into contact with fluids from an infected person.

Many adults get HBV through unprotected sex. People who have had several sexual partners or had other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are more at risk of getting HBV.

Health workers, drug users who share needles, and people who live with HBV carriers are all at risk.

The National Institute of Virology says the highest risk group in South Africa, however, are children aged between two and four. Most children become infected with HBV through contact with the blood of other children or family members. Many

Hepatitis B is not yet included in the South African National Immunisation Programme.

babies are infected by mothers who have the disease.

Other ways people get infected are:

- Sharing toothbrushes or razors;
- During surgical or dental work;
- Through tattooing or ear piercing; and
- Through blood transfusions.

What are the signs of Hepatitis B?

Many people do not show any signs of HBV, until the disease becomes very serious. Before that, the infected person may just be weak, and feel as if they have flu.

At the advanced stage of HBV, the person will be quite ill for about two weeks, and then very weak for up to three months.

The most common signs of advanced Hepatitis B include:

- Dark orange or brown urine;
- Whitish coloured faeces;
- The whites of the eyes will turn very yellow;
- Pain on the right side of body, underneath the ribcage;
- Loss of appetite;
- Feeling nauseous or vomiting, especially at the sight or smell of food;
- Feeling very tired and weak.

How do you treat Hepatitis B?

- Get lots of rest;
- Do not use any medicines. Antibiotics will not help, and some medicines may cause further damage to the liver;
- Drink lots of fluids, especially

fruit juices and soups;

- When your appetite has returned, eat a good balance of fruits, vegetables, cereals, and proteins. Avoid oily foods;
- Do not drink any alcohol. The infected liver is at risk and alcohol will cause a lot of damage.

Prevention is better than cure

You can prevent getting HBV. Here are some ways:

- Use condoms during sex;
- Avoid contact with other people's blood;
- Immunisation. This is the best way to prevent getting HBV.

Babies should be immunised between 18 and 24 months. Three injections over six months with a booster every five to eight years, will protect the child for life. Adults at risk of getting HBV can have a gamma globulin injection, which is effective for three to six months.

Tests and immunisations for Hepatitis B are available at your doctor or local hospital. Immunisation for HBV is expensive. It costs about R80 for three injections for a baby, and R30 for an injection of gamma globulin.

Because of the high cost of HBV vaccine, Hepatitis B is not included in the South African National Immunisation Programme (NIP). The NIP provides free immunisation for children against the six major killer diseases.

This means that children at risk are not protected from Hepatitis B.

There is hope, though. The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), have asked the South African government to include Hepatitis B in the national immunisation programme as from 1995. ★

As a matter of fact . . .

God and gender

Women in Australia's Anglican Church want to make changes to the church prayer book. The Women's Commission wants the language to be "gender neutral," so that God is not spoken of as being either male or female.

"Creator, Redeemer and Spirit of Grace" would be used instead of "Father, Son and Holy Spirit".

They also want to cut down on how many times God is spoken about as "He".

Other problems they have is that the book pays more attention to the masculine parts of God's nature. It overlooks the more feminine parts, such as "the nurturer, the provider, the comforter and sustainer".

However, one of the (male) ministers who is responsible for re-working the book, said they would not reduce the number of times God is spoken of as male.

"We don't want to stop calling God 'Father' because that's the way Jesus taught his disciples to pray," he said.



Women and land in Zimbabwe

Land distribution is a big issue in Zimbabwe, especially in rural areas. The most productive land is owned by white commercial farmers. Where land is available, women have been disadvantaged because traditionally, only men have a "right" to own land.

"A woman is expected to get married, or to be looked after by her father. If the husband dies, or the couple divorces, women are left high and dry," says Elizabeth Gwaunza, national co-ordinator for Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA).

Women make up more than 50 percent of Zimbabwe's population. Most live in rural areas where they till the land while their husbands are at work in urban areas.

Man rapes and kills girl

A railway security officer in India was recently charged with raping and killing a nine-year-old girl. He told the court he believed sexual intercourse with a virgin would cure him of AIDS.

He was charged with rape and murder, for which he faces the death penalty. After his arrest, he confessed to raping and killing his colleague's daughter.

Sexually harassed

I have been working in a grocery shop in Krugersdorp for about six months. Everything was fine until one of the men who pack the grocery started giving me problems.

For the past two months he has been insisting that I go out with him. I have told him many times that I'm not interested, but he does not stop.

Sometimes when we are packing groceries together on the shelves, he touches my bottom and breasts. When I tell him to stop doing this, he just laughs at me and says I secretly like what he does. I'm afraid to tell my employer because this man has been working there for eight years. I don't know what to do. Please help me.

*Dikeledi,
Krugersdorp*

Dear Dikeledi
You shouldn't be forced to take this treatment from anyone.

Dear Sisi

**Speak to someone who cares! If there is something bothering you and you want advice, write to:
Dear Sis, SPEAK,
PO Box 556,
Johannesburg, 2000**

What this man is doing to you is called sexual harassment and it is wrong.

He has no right to force you to go out with him. He doesn't have the right to touch you

without your permission.

Men are brought up to believe they have sexual feelings which they don't have control over. Women, on the other hand, are brought up to believe they should behave, dress and talk to men in a manner which does not result in men losing control of their sexual feelings. People believe women are responsible for sexual harassment because they provoked men in a certain way. So, men freely harass women and women keep quiet because they are scared of being disgraced and harassed further.

Dikeledi, you and other women do not have to keep quiet about it. Contact the Sexual Harassment Education Project, as soon as you can, at this number: (011) 403 5650. Ask for Patricia, Maud or Miriam.

COMPETITION

Win a radio/cassette player

You can be the lucky winner of a radio/cassette player. All you have to do is answer the question below and send your entry to SPEAK magazine.

Which new law should protect women against husbands or partners who abuse them?

Answer

Competition rules: The decision of the judges is final. This competition is only open to people living in South Africa. Employees and relatives of employees of SPEAK are not allowed to enter.

The closing date is 15 December 1994. The winners will be announced in SPEAK.

Name

Address

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....Code.....

Send your entry to:
SPEAK RADIO/CASSETTE PLAYER
COMPETITION
PO Box 556
Johannesburg 2000

TAXI TALK

My wife and I

One husband who believes in equality between men and women – and does what he believes is right. By *Bohlali Molantwa*

My neighbours call me Mr Korobela. They think I have been bewitched by my wife. I have been given this name because I treat my wife differently from many husbands. Even my mother is ashamed of me. She doesn't understand why I treat my wife as I do.

My wife is a domestic worker. She comes home late at night. So I prepare food for her, my mother and my little son. My mother always complains that a man is not supposed to cook. But I tell her that I have to think of my wife who comes home tired every day.

On Saturday she works half day. When she is not at home I carry the child on my back and clean the

whole house. Sometimes I do the washing. This makes people laugh at me. But I do not worry. I know they think it is funny because they are not used to it.

One day my mother called me. "You must stop doing your wife's work. You have paid lobola for her," she said.

"No", I said, "I was not buying my wife, I was paying to bring together two families, my family and hers. She also paid when she bought my family clothing during our bohadi."

My wife is happy to find a loving husband. She says that I should not worry if people say bad things about me. They think women are less important than men. She says

that is why women are treated like children. She tells me that the day will come when they will realise that women are equal to men and must be treated like that.

I think she is right. It may take time but many people will change. Remember how blacks were treated during apartheid?

They were treated like this because of the colour of their skin. This is the same as women. They are treated like this because of their bodies. Things change. Who ever thought that South Africa would have a black President. It won't be long before people will see that women and men are equal. ☼



Adapted from *Active Voice* – an English Literacy Project publication

NOTICES

Celebrate Women

Often women do not celebrate their lives. There are times when women have to.

The Southern African Women Artists 1995 Diary celebrates the confidence and pride of women. It recognises and honours women artists' success.

If you would like to join in this celebration, send R34.00 (includes postage and VAT) to:

Phambili Agencies

P O Box 1080

Northcliff 2115

Johannesburg

You could also ask your local bookshop for a copy of the diary.

SA's Public Holidays

- January 1, New Year's Day
- March 21, Human Rights Day
- April 14, Good Friday
- April 17, Family Day
- April 27, Constitution Day
- May 1, Workers Day
- June 16, Youth Day
- August 9, National Women's Day (Viva!)
- September 24, Heritage Day
- December 16, Day of Reconciliation
- December 25, Christmas Day
- December 26, Goodwill Day

Sexual Harassment

The Sexual Harassment Education Project (SHEP) is a new programme. It works with all trade unions on sexual harassment. Shep invites women from all organisations to the launch of the project at the ICI Building in Braamfontein on November 5.

For further details, phone Patricia, Maud or Mirriam at (011) 403 5650

Women's Literacy Journal

Women writers are invited to submit contributions for a new South African women's literacy journal. Stories, essays, poetry and artwork are welcome.

For more details to:

Sandra Braude

Editor

New Women's Literacy Journal

P O Box 813

Houghton 2014

Need Health and Safety Training?

The Occupational Health and Safety Act gives you the right to be trained. The Occupational Safety and Health Organisation (OSHO) provides the training for health and safety workers.

The training helps you understand your role in health, safety inspection and investigation at the workplace.

If you need such training contact OSHO at:

Workplace Information Group: (011) 725 1415

Industrial Health Unit: (031) 260 2441

IHSEP: (0431) 435 301

November 25

International day to

END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

