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No. 29



WOMEN

FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM!

★ ANTI-LRA MARCH

★ NAMIBIAN WOMEN

★ NATAL WAR

★ ANTI-RAPE MARCH

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Cover picture: SPEAK

SPEAK has offices in Durban and in Johannesburg.

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Johannesburg: we are moving to new offices at the beginning of July 1990, and we will tell readers our new address in the next issue of SPEAK. Our telephone number is: (011) 3316100. If you want to write to SPEAK, please write to: SPEAK, P.O. Box 45213, Mayfair, 2018, Johannesburg, South Africa.

SPEAK Collective members are: Gill, Helen, Jacqueline, Karen, Nise, Phumelele, Shamim, and Vanessa. We wish Phumelele all the best with the birth of her new baby. Thanks to Barbie and Libby for help with this issue of SPEAK.

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Letters to SPEAK



Dear SPEAK

It is true that women are oppressed at work, at home and in the community. It is time that we decide on the good things from our culture. Cultural principles that are outdated and oppressive to women must be addressed. Women must stand up and fight for their rights. There are democratic and progressive organisations and structures like women's forums, trade unions, civic associations, parent-student-teacher organisations. Women's place today is not in the kitchen, but in the struggle. Women must not be seen as sex-objects. We must discuss things that are relevant with them. They must also take part in the struggle against discrimination, capitalism and violence.

Women must work alongside men in building a new, democratic and progressive South Africa. Let us advance towards a free South Africa. De Klerk's regime is on the retreat at a very fast pace.

Free women - free the nation!

Freedom to women - freedom to the nation!

Viva women's forum!

Viva the spirit of democracy!

Viva the spirit of equal rights for women!

Today our country is in economic ruins because of De Klerk's regime.

Yours faithfully

Morgan Gomati

Meadowlands

Dear Morgan, thanks for your letter. We agree with your militant spirit in fighting women's oppression and exploitation - SPEAK Collective.

Dear SPEAK

The majority of black women in our country are lost in the dark. I am shocked by those who even have professions and yet who still endure oppression by their husbands. I realise that women are from youth oppressed by their

parents. They have no rights in order to meet challenges. They need to have their own point of view, and not have to rely on men. Men and women in our non-racial, democratic struggle must ensure that this problem is dealt with. Together we as democrats must see to it that sexism is recognised and ended.

We must not believe that women are incapable of facing dangerous situations. Women can respond in the same way as men. Whenever a man dies, the family is left under control of women. Nothing can hinder women to become leaders in society, in organisations, in the family. The wrong vision has led to an unequal number of men as compared to women being involved in the struggle.

Chauvinism is encouraged by black tradition, for example, in marriages, court cases, etc. Are the people aware of this? Our tradition must be furthered in such a way that women's rights are ensured for our progress.

Women must struggle until they attain their rights. Structures through which this problem can be tackled must be formed countrywide in order to discuss this problem of the oppression of women.

Yours faithfully
Samson Nkadimeng
Sekhukhuneland

Dear Samson, thank you for your letter in which you raise important issues. We are glad that you have joined the fight against sexism! - SPEAK Collective

Dear SPEAK

I am very pleased for this magazine. I say PHAMBILI! with it. It's a long time I was looking for such a thing, and didn't know whom to contact. I am a woman who wants to join other women. I am not working. What can I do to join you?

Yours faithfully
Florence Rikhotso
Protea South

Dear Florence, we are pleased that you have found SPEAK, and we feel encouraged by your words about SPEAK. We are a women's magazine and do not recruit membership. But if you would like to, you could become a SPEAK seller, and spread the word about women's liberation! Write to us for more details if you are interested. And why not organise women in your area? - SPEAK Collective.

Dear SPEAK Collective

I enjoyed your article "Exposing the Hidden Messages" in SPEAK number 27. Most advertisements do indeed portray women as being passive, happy housewives and/or sex objects. And adverts pretend that only middle-class and rich people live in the world. My criticism of the article is that it appears to imply that adverts cause sexist and classist attitudes. For example, the article states: "The advert's message was that women are pretty things who keep asking men to buy them things, and that men are the breadwinners. It showed a twisted idea of love and life." Also, "Many people who watch adverts and programmes begin to believe that the way things are shown is the way things should be." But, the attitudes in the adverts are always found in societies which oppress and exploit women and the working class. Thus, these adverts reflect - and are a picture of - the inequalities of our society and tend to reinforce these inequalities. It is very important to expose the "hidden messages" in adverts. But this is only one part of the broader struggle to completely transform society and put an end to ideologies that allow twisted adverts to flourish.

Yours sincerely
Phyllis Orner
Cape Town

Dear Phyllis, thank you for your contribution. We agree with the important point that you make. We look forward to contributions from readers who are angry about sexist, racist or classist adverts that they see. Only when we unite in protest will we have the power to challenge the advertisers - SPEAK Collective.

More letters on page 24 ...

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More than 3000 people, mainly women, marched to fight for workers' rights in Johannesburg recently.

Photo: SPEAK

Nobody can stop the river from flowing!

COSATU women march against the LRA

Saturday 28th of April 1990 saw a protest march with a difference. On this day women from the COSATU Wits Region organised a march of more than 3000 people, most of whom were women. The march was to protest against the union-bashing Labour Relations Amendment Act (LRA). Just over a week later, the bosses' organisation, SACCOLA, and COSATU together with NACTU, reached agreement on how they want the labour law to be. They will submit their document to the government. This agreement is the result of more than a year and a half of bitter struggle by workers and their unions against a law that was intended to crush their rights as workers.

A march organised by women

Women had the idea for this march, and it was women who organised it. "Women organised this march because we could see that things were becoming bad without women. Women want also to be free," said one of the marchers. The march was full of joy and energy. There was toyi-toying and singing from beginning to end. Most of the marshalls were women and they did a very good job. "We are the traffic officers of the future," called out one of the marshalls as they controlled the traffic.

A great success

The march was organised by COSATU women. Men and women gathered outside St. Mary's Church in De Villiers street, central Johannesburg, on Saturday morning. The marchers' first stop was the Department of Manpower. But the Department was not open. The march went on to the Jeppe Street Police Station. The leaders of the march handed over a memorandum with demands. The march ended with the singing of Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika. Everybody felt that the march was a great

success, although the crowd should have been bigger. Hundreds more workers were waiting at locals around Johannesburg, but there had been a problem with the buses. Otherwise the march went without any problems. As one marcher said: "The march was beautiful. There was no teargas and no bullets."

A long and bitter fight

Workers have fought the LRA because the LRA makes it very difficult for unions to carry on their work. It weakens the power of the unions. The Act was passed in September 1988. Even before that time, unions and community organisations began protesting against this Act.

As the LRA stands now it is very difficult for a union to get permission to have a strike. It also takes a long time to get permission. Even if the union does get permission, the bosses can try and stop it through the courts and force workers to go back to work. If workers go on strike without getting permission then management can make the union pay them for money that they lost while workers were on strike. Some kinds of strikes are totally banned, like sympathy strikes (strikes which workers call to support other workers on strike). All of this and more is what the unions have been fighting against.

Women are also affected by the LRA

The women's march is part of this struggle to change the LRA so that it does not tie the unions' hands like it is doing at the moment. Women are showing that the LRA is bad for them: "As women we are also affected by this LRA, for instance we have a lot of women in the domestic and farm areas, and the law doesn't cover them. So we demand legislation to cover such people," said one of the organisers of the march. The marchers were saying that workers do not want the government to use their laws to break down the workers' power. The marchers were demanding full rights for all workers so that they can organise freely.

Women can be leaders

The march is important because it shows men and women that women can be leaders. The march was organised by women not because women want to leave men out. People have



Forward to women workers' rights!

Photo: SPEAK



Comrade Refiloe from PPWAWU addresses the marchers.

Photo: SPEAK



Many of the marshalls were women.

Photo: SPEAK

been asking "where are the women?". They are worried, that in this time of change in our country, women's demands are not being put forward. Our women leaders are saying that women have to make their voices heard now. One of the organisers of the march said: "We've got men on this march but what we are saying is: it is initiated by women. Now is the time that women should stand up and fight for their rights together with our male comrades."

Lots of plans are being made for a future South Africa. Women must make sure that they are a real part of this. But this will not happen if there are no women leaders and if women are not at the negotiating table. It will not happen if women are not active in their organisations, making sure that their demands are seen and heard by all.

Women have strength and knowledge

COSATU women in the Wits Region are showing that they have the strength and the knowledge to organise themselves in big protests like marches. As one of the marchers said: "The women can do these things. They can organize themselves. Why not? We must show men that we can do it!"

Male comrades were very enthusiastic about the march and were proud of the women. As one of them said: "It was beautiful. It is a history this - for women. We are saluting the women."

Women, come out of the kitchen!

The march was an encouragement to all women to become active in their unions and in their struggles as women. There are still many women not involved in unions or community organisations. Many women still do not see themselves as part of the struggle. Comrade Sina Molelekeng from the Printing, Paper, Wood and Allied Workers Union (PPWAWU) was one of the organisers of the march. She said that organised women want to get all women involved in the struggle. She said: "We were asking ourselves how can we encourage women to see themselves as part of the struggle? They feel that they must be based in the kitchens, in the churches, in the home." One of the placards held up by a marcher showed her answer to this problem: "Women come out of the kitchen !"

Problems facing women workers

In the unions women have decided to meet separately from men. This is to try to get more and more women involved in the union's activities. It is also to make sure that women's demands at the workplace are listened to by all. There are many reasons why women feel they should meet separately from men. Some of these are:

- * Women feel shy in front of men to say what they feel. They often feel more confident of themselves when they are in a group of women without men.

- * Women can get more involved in the union. Often more women will come to women's meetings because they feel more comfortable there. At these meetings they will discuss things to do with the union as well as things to do with women.
- * Men do not often fight for women's issues. For example, women's health issues like cervical cancer and maternity leave.
- * Women can become leaders. If they are meeting alone they can build up their confidence and learn about speaking in public. Then they might find it easier to talk in a meeting with both men and women. Says Comrade Refiloe Ndzuta of PPWAWU: "We hope that women's branches will train women to talk more in general meetings of the union. At the moment women don't speak so they are not elected as shop stewards."

was planned by women in COSATU committees to encourage many more women to get involved in the women's forums and to be leaders. As one of the organisers said: "It is important that we motivate the women to come up, to take up leadership, to be active in the union, and in the organisation as a whole." But women organising separately does not mean women should not get involved in all organisations. Women have to make sure that they are in all organisations - unions, community organisations, youth organisations and more. More actions like this will encourage more women to become involved in the struggle, and take their rightful place in decision-making bodies at every level. And this is beginning to happen. In the words of one of the women on the march: "Nobody can stop the river from flowing, we are going forward."

Thanks to Tammy Shefer from Lacom, Johannesburg for writing this article.

A call to women by women
The march was a call to women by women. It



Women workers showed that they too can lead.

Photo: Dawn Norton

FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM!

Comrade Nashilongo speaks about the women's struggle in Namibia.



Photo: Afrapix

Comrade Nashilongo Elago on a recent visit to South Africa.

Namibia has won independence after years of struggle. The new Namibia was born on 21 March 1990, bringing new hope for all the people of Namibia. Important and difficult tasks lie ahead of the government and the people of Namibia. And there are many questions about the new Namibia. Will the government be able to see to the needs of the majority instead of just seeing to the comfort of a few? What will the position of workers be? What will the position of women be? And how can the people of Namibia make sure that the government is acting in the interests of the majority? Many of these questions are questions we should be asking of the new

South Africa. The road to independence in Namibia has not been an easy one. The South West African Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO) spearheaded the struggle for freedom in Namibia. Now SWAPO is a party in the new government. SWAPO policies are concerned with making sure that the majority of Namibians live a life of basic comfort and security. But SWAPO needed to win a two thirds majority in the elections that were held in Namibia for SWAPO policies to be the ruling policies. SWAPO did not get this two thirds majority. This means that SWAPO cannot put into action all the changes it would like to.

SPEAK recently met Comrade Nashilongo Elago, a SWAPO member, from Namibia. Comrade Nashilongo works with women and children returning exiles in Namibia. Before this job Comrade Nashilongo was active as the general secretary in a women's organisation called Women's Voice. We asked her what the new Namibia means for women.

The struggle of women in Namibia

Comrade Nashilongo Elago spoke to us about the struggle of women in Namibia. She said: "Women have been part of the struggle for liberation in Namibia for as far back as can be remembered. Women fought alongside men during the time of German occupation, and women continue to fight today. In Namibia, December 10 is National Women's Day, a day on which women's role in the struggle is celebrated."

"Women fought for liberation of Namibia because they felt it was their duty and they were committed. They were not fighting to please men or anybody. Those who went into exile were not pleasing anyone. They felt a deep commitment. As those who remained felt it was their duty to liberate their country. Within that struggle was the struggle for recognition of women as equal partners in the struggle."

The struggle to change ideas

The struggle of women to be seen as equal partners is a difficult struggle. Many men comrades in Namibia still see women as inferiors. Nashilongo said, "Women were recognised and treated as equals in terms of the policy of SWAPO. But as individuals you have to deal with those male comrades in senior positions whose attitude may be something else. The person may not even be aware that he is discriminating. He will just think you are a woman. It is like a slap in the face."

Questioning sexist attitudes - a difficult task

It was not easy for women to question these sexist attitudes of individual men in SWAPO. But SWAPO women in exile were in a better position than SWAPO women in Namibia to question SWAPO men. Nashilongo said, "Inside the country women in SWAPO never raised the sexism of men. Maybe SWAPO

women in exile did. In exile the Women's Council was more organised. And they had access to resources. The women could, for example, get scholarships. And these women could come and fill positions in the party." Their qualifications, skills and positions in the party made it easier for these women to raise problems with the men in SWAPO.

New ideas about women

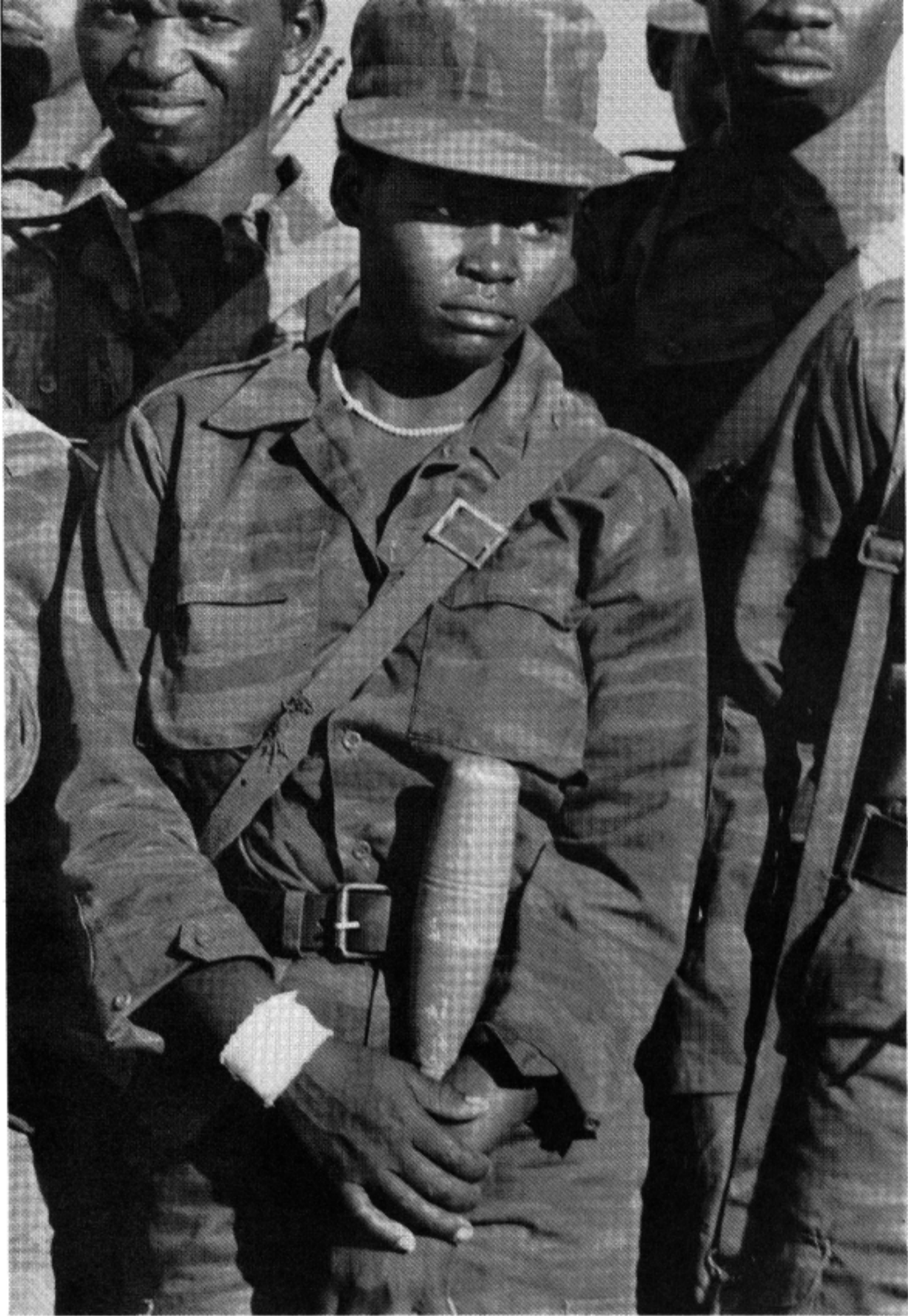
Nashilongo says that another reason why SWAPO women in exile could raise sexism with SWAPO men was that while in exile the men and women of SWAPO came into contact with new ideas about women. Such as the idea that women should participate in life outside the home and that men should share housework and childcare.

"Our people in exile had a situation of exposure to the international community and they were very often confronted with questions relating to the participation of women. Not so at home. We were isolated. We did not have as much contact with the international community. In exile men and women shared the responsibility of childcare, housework and such things." But unfortunately exiles who are returning to Namibia are going back to the old ways. Nashilongo said, "When the exiles returned they went to different villages all over Namibia. And we find that the pressure in society, of traditional attitudes to women, is being imposed. People are going back to the old ways of doing things."



Questioning sexist attitudes is a difficult task. But it has to happen if women and men are to live in a non-sexist society.

Photo: Afrapix



Women have been part of the struggle for liberation in Namibia as far back as can be remembered. Photo: Afrapix

Women and the constitution

Nashilongo believes that the government has taken an important step in drawing up a constitution giving women rights. She believes that women's rights were taken up in the constitution because SWAPO was exposed to the ideas of women's liberation outside Namibia. But changes in constitutions are only one part of the battle. People's attitudes about

women must also change. As Nashilongo says: "Women are still seen as minors by most people. The new constitution of Namibia protects and guarantees the rights of all men and women. The language used in the constitution includes women. But it is not enough having women's rights guaranteed in the constitution." Women in Namibia feel that it is important that all women should understand

what the new constitution means for them. Nashilongo told us: "Women are beginning to discuss the constitution. We need to explain what the constitution means. Women's rights which are a part of the constitution must filter to grassroots."

Women in leadership

Nashilongo believes that women must be part of the leadership and must be actively involved in making decisions. Decision-making should not be left to men. She said: "Women have not had a chance to set up their own agenda. The agenda of women has been dictated by men. Any project of women had to satisfy the needs of men in power. Women must be part of making decisions in the new Namibia. Today in Namibia there are very few women at the top levels. Women are very poorly represented in political parties, the church and in places where decisions affecting the lives of Namibians are made." Nashilongo spoke about the importance of training for women so that they have the skills to be in leadership and play a part in decision-making.

Women must organise

Nashilongo believes that women can make sure their interests will be advanced through organisation. The kind of organisation that she feels will see to the needs of women is a non-governmental organisation. She said: "We need a women's non-governmental organisation as a powerhouse for women, and as a watchdog for women's rights. We need some group from where we can draw energy to put women in important positions." This will help to ensure that women are better represented in organisations.

She said: "There is lots of work for women. No one is going to do this for us. The task is a big one. Apartheid has been declared dead, but we still have to address the differences between men and women."

A non-governmental women's organisation

The non-governmental women's group will be outside of the government, and independent of the different political parties. Nashilongo sees this as important because she believes that women cannot leave their future in the hands of

the government alone. The women's non-governmental organisation would play a different role from women's wings of political parties. SWAPO Women's Council, for example, plays an important role within SWAPO. As an arm of SWAPO, the Women's Council will attend to issues affecting women's lives. But its priority will be overall party concerns rather than women's concerns.

Nashilongo said: "Women in political parties would advance the ideology of the party. An organisation to which all women belong regardless of political party, religion, and so on, will mainly be addressing issues concerning women first. Regardless of differing ideologies."

The women's non-governmental organisation does not rule out the responsibility of the government to women. In some countries this responsibility is met through a Women's Ministry, which is a separate government department. Nashilongo told us that women in SWAPO had wanted a women's ministry. But SWAPO women did not get this. Instead, in Namibia today, women's issues will be dealt with through a women's section in the President's office.

Lessons to be learnt

Many of the things Comrade Nashilongo told us have lessons for women in South Africa. We are looking at a future constitution for South Africa. Women in South Africa are talking about the kind of organisation we need to advance our interests. It is important that we look at these issues seriously.

A message for South African women

Nashilongo had this to say about women in South Africa: "Women in South Africa have made much greater advances than us in Namibia. We in Namibia started very late in looking at the constitution and because of this we as women could not make much of a contribution. South African women have an advantage because of the different non-governmental groups to address the rights of women." It is up to the people in South Africa to see that we do advance the cause of women in South Africa. We salute the women of Namibia in their struggle!

Hope, after many years of suffering

- a visit to Uganda

A member of SPEAK Collective attended a women's health meeting in Uganda in October 1989. It was a meeting of women from all over Africa. The meeting was organised by the Ugandan Chapter of the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights, which is based in Holland. It was an opportunity to share ideas and experiences with women from Sudan, Ethiopia, Liberia, Guinea, Tanzania, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. There were other women from South Africa who attended, including women from the ANC health section in Lusaka. There were women from the 49 women's organisations in Uganda who attended the meeting. Uganda was a very exciting country to visit. We learnt about the struggles of the people of Uganda. And we learnt how the Ugandan government is trying to ensure a truly democratic country.

Hope, after many years of suffering

Ugandan women feel very real hope that they will win democracy and peace in their country. The people of Uganda suffered many years of war, poverty and repression under dictators, Idi Amin and Milton Obote. In 1986 the National Resistance Movement (NRM) took power after waging a war of liberation for many years. The NRM won the support of the majority of Ugandan people. When the NRM took control of new areas in Uganda, they set up liberated zones with democratic structures called Resistance Councils. These Resistance Councils continue to function today.

Participation by the people in the government

Resistance councils work from a village level, right up to a national level. At each level of government there are nine members. These include a women's representative, a youth

representative, and other representatives dealing with different areas. These include: defence, information, education, health, rehabilitation, and development. This structure ensures that the people of Uganda can play a real part in their government. It also ensures women's participation at all levels of government. At the national level, there is the National Resistance Council (NRC). This is the same as a parliament. There are 39 women members of the NRC.

Uganda - a new constitution

Today, the NRM is working on drawing up a new constitution for Uganda. They are asking the people of Uganda to discuss what they want in a new constitution. There is much discussion happening around this constitution. An important part of the discussion is about how to make sure that the past practices that oppressed women are stamped out. The NRM government is serious about freeing women from oppression. The government believes that women have to be involved in changing things if they are to create a peaceful and democratic future. They firmly believe that discrimination against women must stop.

Uganda - a feminist president?

Yoweri Museveni is the President of Uganda. He spoke to the women attending the health meeting. He said that women are second class citizens in a third world, and he said that this oppression of women must be fought. He saw this as important so that women could be a real part of the struggle for a better future in Uganda. And he made the point that freedom for women is a fundamental human right.

Women's oppression must be fought

Museveni said: "Women experience a lack of education, lack of opportunity, ill health, and early death." He said that women work on the

land and have a key role to play in the economy of the country. Yet they are not recognised for this. "Women's labour is not valued, and women cannot own land under traditional law," said Musoveni, "Women cannot get banking loans. Women cannot easily get education and training. Women have no say in family decisions, or in matters relating to the community or the country. If women have a strong point of view, they are said to be unwomanly. Women are taught to be submissive. They are expected to be responsible for the sexual gratification of their husbands."

Women: the exploited of the exploited

"The system of polygamy - where men have more than one wife - is a source of cheap labour," said Musoveni. He went on to talk about the harmful traditional practice of female circumcision. This is the practice whereby part of a woman's body that gives her sexual pleasure, her clitoris, is cut off. The President said: "These harmful traditional practices are meant to control girls and teach them how to sexually gratify men. Girls are taught to speak in low respectful voices and to lower their eyes in the presence of men. Sometimes they learn to accept being beaten by the husband and his family. These discriminatory practices make women the exploited of the exploited. They make a woman a second class citizen in a third world." The President spoke about the problem of isolation for women. Most women in Uganda do not belong to any group or organisation. For most women living on the land there is no neighbour within shouting distance.

Serious women's health problems

President Musoveni talked about the serious problems to do with women's health in Uganda. He said that half of all women who die in Uganda die as a result of problems in childbirth. Teenage pregnancies wear down the health of young girls. Rural women work a 15-hour day. The president said: "And this long day is made longer when they are woken up at night by babies who wake up at night for feeds. And by husbands who come home late from a night's drinking. Women spend many hours walking to fetch water. Women are overworked and need to be freed so that they can have more leisure

time, and be more productive when they work." Musoveni called for education for all girls and women. For clean drinking water. And for ways in which women's working day could be made shorter.

Government support for stamping out women's oppression

Women's groups are being set up, and there are women in parliament. These are signs that women in Uganda are organising. Muslim women, women in development groups and co-operatives, traditional birth attendants are all organising. These organisations come under the umbrella of the National Council of Women. There is a Ministry of Women and Development in the government, whose task it is to organise and give information to women. Women organise in many ways. They have the support of a government that knows about the problems that women face, and is committed to seeing women's lives change for the better. We in South Africa should take strength from this. We must make sure that our new government is concerned about stamping out women's oppression in all its forms.





Taking photographs

Taking a picture seems easy - lift the camera, aim, and press the button. But there's a lot more to photography than that. A camera can be used for family snapshots, advertising and scientific research. It can record events for newspapers, magazines and

for freezing historic moments so that thousands can share them - like the photographs recording Nelson Mandela's first steps into freedom. A very important kind of photography is called documentary photography. This is photography that is aimed at



Soweto. Photo: Ingrid Hudson

recording and exposing the injustices in society and the struggle to end those injustices. In South Africa, photographers have taken pictures that show the sufferings of farm workers, the terrible conditions in mine compounds, the resistance of angry

schoolchildren and other things which show the things that are wrong with our society. But there are no rules for making documentary photographs. Each photographer looks for and finds what she or he feels is important. Turn over the page for more!

Taking photographs

It is hard, but exciting to make good photographs. And photography is expensive. But there is somewhere to go to if you would like to learn how to take photographs and if you live in Johannesburg. A course in photography is being run from the beginning of August 1990. It is a special beginners' course, which shows how to use the camera, introduces students to the work of the great documentary photographers and explains how they achieved what they did. The course provides practical experience in taking photographs.

The course lasts for 8 weeks. Classes will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 - 8pm, and Saturdays from 10am - 12. Students attend one class per week. Students who do not own

a camera will be provided with cameras to use during classes. Bursaries will be available for students. The classes are held in the old Newtown Post Office, near the Market Theatre and just a block away from the bus and taxi ranks in Bree Street. If you would like to attend this course, send a letter giving information about yourself, a recommendation from any organisation or group that you are a member of, and the names of two referees.

Send your letter to: Attention: Photography Course, The Market Gallery, The Market Theatre, Bree Street, Newtown, Johannesburg. Don't forget to say why you are interested in the course.

Thanks to Joyce Ozynski from Photoworkshop for this article.

Documentary photographs show the injustices in our society. This photograph was taken by Gisele Wulfsohn, Afrapix, at Plettenberg Bay in the Cape. The photograph tells a story on its own, in a powerful way.





Soweto women march against rape. Their message is clear. Rape must stop!

Photo: Afrapix

NO TO RAPE!

"Joyina, joyina! Join us, join us! Stop rape in our township. We don't want it. Join us! It could be you next, it could be your daughter or mother next. It could be my daughter next. Join us, let us stop these terrible rapes that happen!" This is what Soweto women called out as they marched along the streets of Diepkloof, Soweto in February this year.

A march against rape

The anti-rape march was organised by church women. One of the organisers of the march, Maggie Nkwe explained why they organised the march. She said: "One day in church, at prayer time, one woman stood up and prayed for her granddaughter who had been raped. Another woman stood up and prayed for someone she knew who had been raped. Then another, and another, and another. Then we realised that this was an issue that we had to take up. These rapes must stop."

Every minute-and-a-half a woman or girl is raped in South Africa

Police reports say that in 1987 there were 1 947 rapes reported to the police in Soweto. Last year, in 1989, there were 2 178 rapes reported in Soweto. But these numbers do not tell the whole story because not all women who are raped report the rape. It is estimated that in South Africa only one out of every 20 rapes is reported. This means that about 320 000 women are raped each year. In other words, every minute-and-a-half a woman in South Africa is raped.

Rape is on the increase. And organised gang rape is also on the increase. In Soweto a gang called the 'jackrollers' has put more fear into women's lives. The more violent our society becomes, the more violence there is against women, like rape, battery, and sexual harassment.



A POWA member gets support for her message.

Photo: Afrapix

Making history

The Soweto women made history. It is one of the first times that a march against rape has been organised in our country. It was a march with a strong message. The march started small, but more and more people joined in along the way. By the end of the march there were more than 200 women who had joined in. At first some passer-bys thought the march was about the unbanning of the people's organisations that took place the day before. But the placards women carried told the message about the march. Placards spoke out about the problem of gang rapists, and the terrible effect of rape on women. "Sexual abuse is a crime against humanity," said one placard, "There is no love in rape," said another.

There were representatives of different organisations on the march. There were church women, women from the Federation of Transvaal Women (FEDTRAW), and from People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA). SPEAK spoke to members of POWA after the march. POWA is a women's organisation committed to fighting rape and battery. They spoke to us of the work they do. They said: "POWA gives talks and workshops to raise awareness about rape. We also offer a counselling service for women. POWA gives

emotional support, medical and legal advice to women who have been raped or battered. POWA also runs a shelter where we give accommodation to women who are trying to leave a violent relationship. We offer a phone-in service to women needing help."

Why does rape happen?

POWA spoke about why rape happens. They said: "We believe that rape is a form of violence that men use on women. Men cause the violence because of the power that men have over women in our society."

The rapists are the ones to blame

Often people believe that women who get raped are the ones to blame for it. And they believe that the woman could have avoided it in some way. POWA told us: "These false things that are given as reasons for rape, or what we call 'the myths' about rape, are what we fight. Some of the myths are that women enjoy rape, that nice girls don't get raped, or that women 'ask' to be raped by how they dress. And there is the belief that only young women are raped. But this is all nonsense. Women of all ages get raped. Recently a four-year old girl was raped in her home by a stranger who broke in while the family was asleep. We cannot say that she 'asked to be raped,' or was 'dressed to invite rape'. We have to stop looking to females as being the cause of rape. The men who rape are the ones to blame."

POWA went on to say: "Society teaches that men and women should be treated differently. Boys are brought up to be strong, aggressive and in control of their lives. Girls, on the other hand, are taught to be passive, and to allow men to control their lives. Many men do not think that it is wrong to rape a woman. They think they have the right to take her, with force if necessary, when she does not agree."

This violence can be stopped

POWA believes that this violence can be stopped. They say: "We have to educate people about the problem. We have to talk about the suffering it causes women. People must learn that sexism oppresses women. The fear of violence oppresses women. Women's voices must be strong, so that liberation in South Africa



At the end of the march, women spoke about why they organised the march. Young, old, women, men, girls and boys - all agreed that rape is a serious crime, and must be fought. Photo: Afrapix

will also mean liberation from rape, battery, sexual harassment and the fear of violence."

Progressive organisations have a role to play

POWA believes that progressive organisations have a role to play in ending rape and violence against women. They say: "It is up to people's organisations to change people's attitudes in our society. The wrong ideas that people have about rape, sexism, women's exploitation and abuse have to be challenged. These issues must be raised in our organisations. Most organisations state in their constitutions that they are against sexism, but issues affecting women are not taken seriously. The issue of violence and abuse of women should be put high on the agenda of progressive organisations, and there should be more education on women's issues. Rape and women-abuse should be fought as seriously as racism is fought. Only in this way can we hope to end rape."

"The struggle to end violence against women is linked to the struggle for liberation from racism, oppression, and exploitation in this country. It must be understood that violence against

women is part of the violence that is increasing in our country right now. Violence has become a way of life. It has become a weapon of those who have power against those who do not have it. The liberation of women is fundamental to the liberation of all oppressed people in South Africa."

Unite to fight violence against women

Rape is a serious crime. A girl or woman who is raped lives with the terrible memory of this all her life. And in many cases, rape has led to death of the women who are raped.

A 15-year who was raped by gangsters recently died at Hillbrow hospital. She died after having a legal abortion, as she fell pregnant as a result of the rape. The girl's mother said that her daughter was so badly affected by the rape that she would rather kill herself than have the baby. SPEAK dedicates this article to that young Sowetan girl, and to all the thousands and thousands of girls and women who have suffered the terrible trauma of rape. Women must unite to fight the violence that affects them. A new South Africa must protect women from abuse against them. And the fight for that new South Africa must begin now!



More than 3 000 people have lost their lives in the Natal war. Many thousands more have had their homes destroyed. This Natal woman stands in the burning remains of what used to be her home. Photo: Afrapix

The Natal war

The bitter fruit of the apartheid tree

More than 100 000 women, old and young, marched through the streets of Umlazi, Natal, on 3 April this year. The women were angry, frustrated and bitter about the actions of the KwaZulu police in their township. They marched in protest from the Umlazi stadium to the KwaZulu police station. The women were united and strong in their wish to show the police how they feel. One woman who was part of the march said: "We have organised this march to show our anger towards the KwaZulu police who are attacking our children. We demand that they get out of the township."

Brutal violence

Umlazi is one of the townships in South Africa that has experienced brutal police action in recent times. But police violence is only one part of the war that has been going on in Natal

for many years. This war has claimed the lives of more than 3 000 people. And it is said that if the war continues, there will be more than 4 000 dead by the end of the year. Thousands and thousands of people from all over Natal, including places like Mphumulanga, Empangeni, Hammarsdale and Vulindlela, have been left homeless. Life for many thousands in Natal has been turned into a terrible nightmare.

What is this war about?

Radio, TV and newspapers talk of this war as 'black on black' violence. They also say this is a war between Inkatha on one side and UDF and COSATU on the other, with both sides being the attackers. These explanations do not tell the true story of the war in Natal. The fighting is really between Inkatha and those who are not Inkatha members. It is a struggle waged by Inkatha to force people to become members of

Inkatha. It is a struggle for political control. Inkatha is worried that they have not been able to get as many people as they would like to join them. Inkatha has been losing support over the years. Especially since the formation of the UDF and COSATU, and now with the unbanning of the ANC and other organisations.

The war started in Pietermaritzburg in 1987 when Inkatha impis demanded to see people's membership cards. If you were not a member of Inkatha you were seen as an enemy. So it was not only UDF and COSATU members who were seen as enemies of Inkatha. Even if you didn't belong to any organisation you were seen as an enemy.

The seeds of destruction turn into bitter fruit

Inkatha was formed in 1975, and, at that time, it enjoyed some support. Inkatha was sympathetic to the ANC and it used the ANC colours. As time went on people became critical of Gatsha Buthelezi, the Chief Minister of KwaZulu, and the leader of Inkatha. He seemed to be accepting 'homeland' policies. In the early 1980's students at the University of Zululand clashed with Buthelezi. They tried to stop an Inkatha meeting at the campus. They feared that it might cause violence. But Buthelezi went ahead with the meeting. On that day, his vigilantes attacked students in their residence rooms on campus. Five students were killed. This was in 1983. It marked a turning point with Inkatha. It marked the beginning of a horrible history of Inkatha opposition. What is clear is that the Natal war is a bitter fruit from the apartheid tree.

A horrible history of Inkatha opposition

With the formation of UDF in 1983, and COSATU in 1985, Inkatha became more and more aggressive. Inkatha began to openly speak out against these organisations. UDF and COSATU members were attacked, especially in the Pietermaritzburg and Empangeni areas. These attacks have now turned into a full scale war. Many people who are not members of any organisation have also been killed. And the war has spread to many parts of Natal. Mama Ngobese from Ntuzuma told us what she thought of the war: "It was very

quiet in this place until impis from Lindelani, outside Durban, started killing young boys from the neighbouring schools here. They accused the boys of being members of the UDF. One of them is a very senior Inkatha person and a KwaZulu government official. My son was shot and killed. I reported to the police but nothing was done. I hate to talk about it. But the truth must be told. These people are ruthless killers. They started the war. The community had to defend itself." People have lost faith in the police and the courts, because the killers are almost never arrested and brought to court. And people are scared to give evidence in court because their own lives will be in danger.

Organised attacks

It is clear that Inkatha has been going out in organised attacks against communities and individuals in Natal. More than 3000 people have been killed in the war. Of these, about 2000 were UDF/COSATU supporters, and non-Inkatha members. In April this year it was estimated that since the unbanning of the ANC,

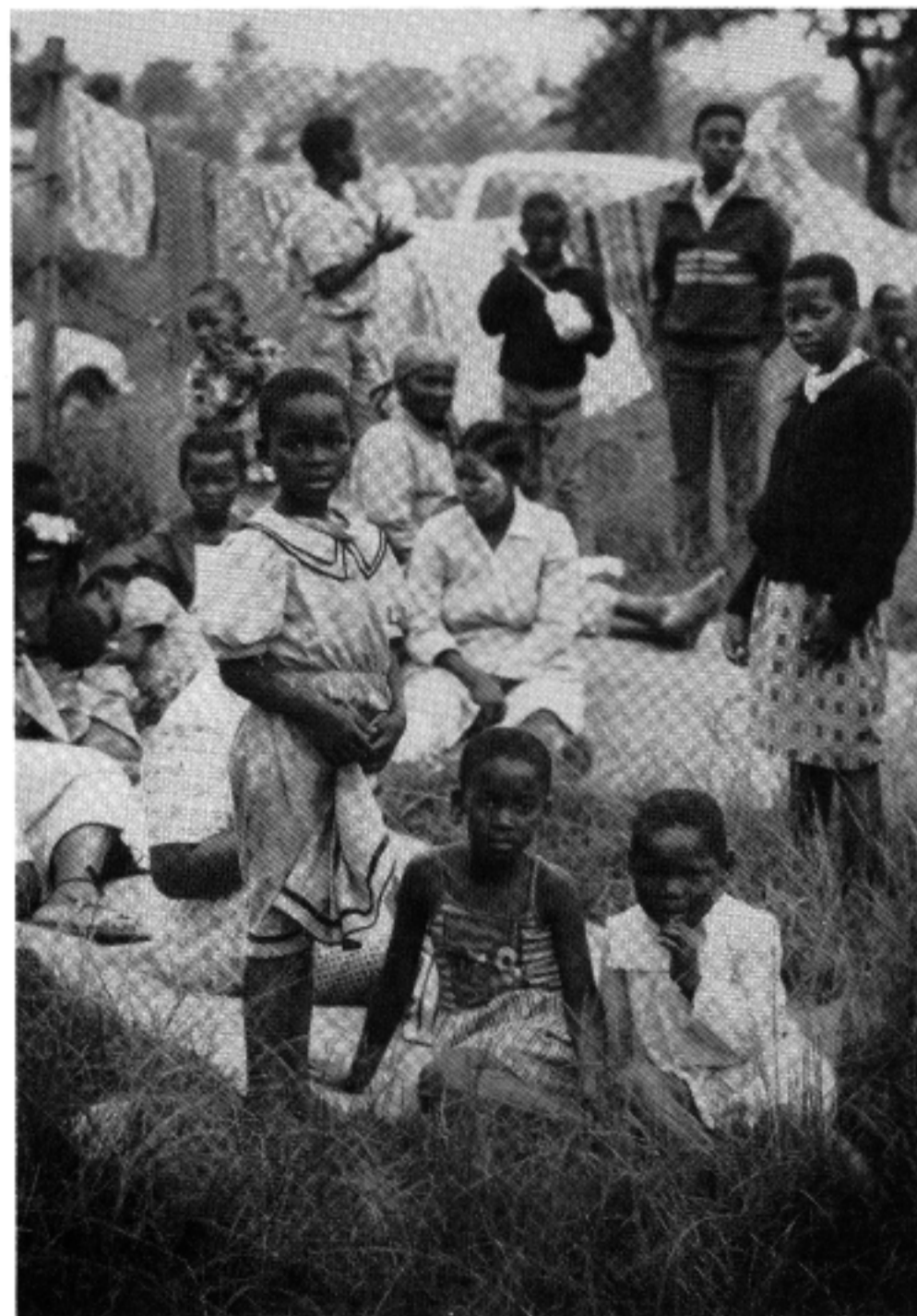


Photo: Afrapix

Children of the war in a place for refugees in Natal.

there have been about 160 people killed. Ten of those were Inkatha supporters.

Counting the cost of the war

In Siyanda, near Durban, in one day two hundred homes were burned down. In Ntuzuma, 50 houses a day at one time were burned down.

One woman from Inanda talked about her experiences. She said: "Many people from the neighbourhood ran away and left their houses because of the violence. Some got a chance to say goodbye, others packed and ran away overnight. I have no idea where they are. I am afraid that I will be left alone here one day." She cannot run away as she has nowhere else to go to. She said: "I have received a lot of threats already from the vigilantes who came here accusing me of encouraging my children to be comrades. I am ready to die. I have seen so many people die in front of me. One day it will have to be me. And it will have to be in this house because I have nowhere to go."

The police

The police have played their part in this war. The police are known to have taken sides with Inkatha. Lawyers have many affidavits describing how the police have worked hand in hand with Inkatha impis. There are cases in which police have allowed Inkatha impis to kill UDF and COSATU people freely. They have watched Inkatha impis set off to attack homes and people. The KwaZulu Police have come under attack for shooting and sjambokking innocent people. People have demanded that these police be withdrawn from the townships. But this demand has been ignored by Chief Buthelezi, who happens to be Minister of KwaZulu Police as well. And yet, Buthelezi's call to withdraw black SADF members was met immediately by the government.

Buthelezi wanted the black SADF members removed as he said they were sympathetic to UDF. The SADF brought in the 32 batallion in their place. These are the mercenaries who have fought against the people of Angola and Namibia. They are known for their killing record. This is indeed an organised war to crush peace-loving people of Natal.

A bitter joke

Police are supposed to protect the people, and to play a role in keeping law and order. But in this war, people see this as a bitter joke. People say that the police are part of the cause of the war, and that they make little effort to protect the people, or to keep law and order.

The children of war

The war has affected everybody, including children. An eight year old boy came into the SPEAK office with his mother. He is from one of the townships where this horrible war is being waged. The first thing he saw in the office was a Mozambican poster that showed a man carrying a gun. He said: "If I can have one like that I will kill all the vigilantes in my area. They have killed my father and and my brother because they have guns." Many children in Natal have been robbed of their childhood. All they talk about is killing and revenge. They are the children of war.

Many schools have had to close down because of the war. What can the children do? Many more children are in refugee camps. They do not know where their parents are. Some watched their parents being brutally killed. There are reports of many children who have run to the neighbouring countries like Swaziland to hide from the war. They are a lost generaton.

Women of the war

Mama Zungu lives in Inanda Newtown, near Durban. She has six children. She has never had a job outside the home in her life. She said: "My husband was killed a year ago by vigilantes because he refused to join Inkatha. My house was burned down. I have been trying to get a job and a place to stay since then. I cannot find a job. I live on handouts. People give me bread or whatever they can. I feel helpless." Many of the people who die are men, most of them breadwinners. This has meant women are left with children they cannot clothe or feed. Some of the women who work at all are domestic workers. They earn no more than R100 a month.

Refugees with no place to go

Thousands of women are refugees. They have run away from their homes with children on their

backs. They stay in church halls and tents. They watch their children starve and fall sick. They wait for charity organisations to give them the first and maybe the only meal for the day. There is no privacy and nowhere to wash nappies. One woman refugee said, "Imagine you have periods and you are sitting with 8 000 people in one place. You need to change and wash badly. But how do you do it in this place?"

The horror of rape

Rape is a hidden horror in this war. It is never in the headlines of newspapers. But many women have been raped and killed. Others have been raped and left. A woman was raped by vigilantes in the same room as her daughter. And another young woman was raped while her six month old baby was screaming for attention. Another 60 year old woman was raped, killed and left lying in a pool of blood. These are some of the incidents which are never reported. Many others are hidden forever. But the pain too lasts forever.

Visiting refugee camps

Visiting the refugee camps is a most painful experience. More than 14 000 people are estimated to be in refugee camps in Pietermaritzburg alone. The devastating effects of this war are written on the people's faces.

Talking to these people for this story in SPEAK was heartbreaking. The refugees want to know what help you are going to give them. They want to know if you can find missing members of the family for them. It is hard to explain that you are just going to write an article. They need help now. Others begin to talk and burst into tears. No words of comfort can make them feel better. They feel as if the whole world has turned against them.

A war against the people - will it ever stop?

In Natal, vigilantes who support Inkatha have turned against the people. In other parts of South Africa there are other groups waging war against the people. Groups like the 'witdoeke' in the Cape. In the Bantustans like Bophutatswana, it is the SADF and the police. These wars against the people must stop.

The burning question

In Natal more and more people live in the horror of war and what it means - the homelessness, death and destruction. People have tried to talk to each other about finding ways to bring about peace in Natal. Representatives of organisations involved have met at national and local levels. But, the fighting continues. The burning question on everybody's lips and hearts is: what can be done to stop it?



Umlazi women take a stand in their march for peace in Umlazi township recently.

Photo: New African

Dear Sisters

We would like to extend our solidarity and support to you by telling you about ourselves. We are a voluntary support organisation for women with the following aims:

1. Counselling abused women (rape, battery and incest survivors).
2. Running educational workshops on the reasons for violence against women in order to conscientise people about the oppression of women.
3. Research and publication of material on the role and rights of women in our society.

Counselling and educational workshops are starting this year at the end of April. Our first research project deals with the rights of women in terms of the Constitution. Research in this area is aimed at proposing very specific adaptations to the laws of this country in order to secure women's rights. We would like to share information, ideas and solidarity with you, and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in struggle

WOMEN'S SOLIDARITY

Windhoek, Namibia

Dear Women's Solidarity, thank you for telling us about your organisation. We look forward to sharing information and ideas with you. We wish you solidarity in your struggle.

Dear SPEAK

In your magazine number 27 you spoke about the Women's League and more about the conference which was held recently in Holland. I was much impressed, being a woman who is for the idea of liberation of women. With the little information that I have I would like to join any of the Women's League around Johannesburg and I also would like to be recognised as a member. I hope my application will reach your kindest consideration.

Yours faithfully

Linda Ramatseba

Kwa-Xuma

Dear Linda, thank you for your letter.

The ANC Women's League is in the process of being formed again inside the country. To join the ANC Women's League you would first have to join the ANC. So, contact the nearest ANC office for more details - SPEAK Collective.

Dear SPEAK Collective

I am also one of your magazine readers. I am one of the youth fighting apartheid in South Africa. I would also like to support the fight against sexism, especially here in South Africa, where men use us as their toys. A man leaves his wife and children in the house. He leaves his wife to look after all the problems in the house. He goes off to look for smart girls who he'll take to the hotel for a dinner. Men want us to dress like Lady Di. If he is satisfied with you, he'll just call his friends to do the same to you. They lack what is called humanity. All they are after is sex. I would like to call upon young women not to allow this to happen any more. Dear sisters, let us stop entering these so-called "Beauty Contests" as they are promoting capitalist ideas among us, increasing sexual exploitation more and more, and making us lose our dignity as women. They also make us forget about the struggle. If we really look forward, and organise, we can defeat this enemy "SEXISM." I say this with no fear.

From Nomfundo Mdleleni

Mouth Fletcher

Dear Nomfundo, thank you for your letter which raises some of the burning issues that face women in their lives. We support your strong call to women to unite and fight this terrible oppression that holds women down in an inferior position in our society - SPEAK Collective.

Dear SPEAK

I would like to share this experience with other SPEAK readers. I was at the Protea Magistrate's Court for a certain case, and I listened to a few cases before the one I had gone for started. The one case that I would like to talk about is the one where a 19 year old woman was raped when she went to Mshenguville to look for her aunt. It was at night and she did not know the place well, so a man came and offered to take her to her aunt's place. The man then grabbed her and pulled her towards the bush and raped her. The woman screamed and was rescued by passengers of a passing car. She reported the matter to the police and the rapist was arrested and sentenced to 7 years imprisonment.

What I found interesting was that the magistrate said: "Rape is a very serious crime. Women in Soweto marched recently, saying that they are sick and tired of being molested by men."

Sexually transmitted diseases

- *what are they?*

Most people at some time or other in their lives have sex. This is a very normal thing to do. Sex can be especially nice when there is a good, caring feeling between the two people who have sex with each other. But, unfortunately, although sex can be good for you, there are some things about it that can be harmful. It is important to know about them, in order to protect yourself and your partner.

What are STDs?

Sexually transmitted diseases, or STDs as they are called, are the diseases that men and women can spread to each other when they have sex. You can catch an STD from your partner if your partner has an STD. And you can pass on an STD to a partner if you have an STD. If neither you nor your partner has an STD, you cannot spread it to each other. But the more often you change your partner, the more likely you are to catch an STD, and to spread it to someone else. You cannot catch an STD from toilet seats.

How do STDs spread?

There are different kinds of STDs. Each different kind of STD is caused by a different kind of germ. The STD germs live in men's semen and women's vaginal discharge. The germs move easily from one person to another when they have sex. Some germs give you sores on your penis or vagina. Other germs give you warts on your penis or vagina. Some germs give you a discharge from your penis or vagina. In women, these STD germs can spread into the womb and give bad pains and hot urine, making it painful when they wee. Other STDs cause swollen glands that feel like lumps in the groins. Some STD germs can get into your blood and make you very sick with other kinds of symptoms. They can give you headaches, skin rashes, sore eyes, or even make your

Women have a right to be anywhere they like at any time just like men do, and they must be left alone." I think the march was a great idea and also feel glad that it was recognised to such an extent that it was mentioned in court. Our voices are being heard. Let us fight against women abuse now!

Yours in solidarity
Mrs Mathabe
Soweto

Dear Mrs Mathabe, thank you for sharing your experience with SPEAK. We agree that women abuse must be fought now. We hope you will find our article on the Soweto anti-rape march in this issue of SPEAK interesting - SPEAK Collective.

Dear SPEAK readers

The Department of National Health and Population Development is thinking about changing the abortion laws in this country. They want to know if people's attitudes about abortion have changed.

At the moment the law says a woman can have a legal abortion in any of these situations:

- * if she is under 16 years of age
- * if she was raped
- * if the foetus is in danger
- * if the mother's mental health may suffer.

These laws are strict. Most women cannot get safe and legal abortions. We want women to have greater freedom of choice whether to have or not have an abortion. We want the government to change the abortion laws. These are our reasons:

- * women have a right to choose whether they want an abortion or not. The choice should be ours and not the government's.
- * poor women often suffer from 'back street' abortions.
- * we are worried about the lives of unwanted children.

If you also want the abortion laws to change, write to:

The Department of National Health, Private Bag X63, Pretoria, 0001.

From People For Choice
Johannesburg

**Share your views in SPEAK !Write to:
SPEAK, P.O. Box 45213, Mayfair, 2018,
Johannesburg.**

bones and joints feel sore. This kind of sickness from an STD is more serious and is not as common as the other kinds we have talked about.

Sometimes you can have an STD without knowing it. This is a problem because it means that you can pass the germ on to your sexual partner without knowing that you are infecting that person. If a pregnant woman gets an STD, it can sometimes be passed onto the baby and make the baby very sick. That is why health workers in ante natal clinics check the blood and discharge of pregnant women to make sure that there is no sign of an STD.

In this issue of SPEAK we are going to talk about the STDs that cause sores. In the next issue of SPEAK we will talk about other kinds of STDs. We talk very openly about these sicknesses, because that is the only way that we can explain them properly. We also believe that people have a right to the full story - knowledge is power. And we need knowledge about STDs because they are a big health problem in South Africa and the rest of the world. We have to talk about what they are and how to stop their spread.

What do STD sores look like?

STD sores may look like a pimple, a blister, or an open sore. The sores can be big, like the size of a ten cent piece, or small, like the size of the head of a pin. The most common STDs that cause sores are called syphilis, chancroid and herpes.

The STD called syphilis

The syphilis germs get into your body if you have sex with a person who already has the germ. That person has sores on his penis, or on her vagina. After the germs have got into the body, it can take about a week before the person gets a sore on their penis or vagina. But it may even take a few months before the sore comes out. This sore is not usually painful. It looks like a hole the size of your finger tip. The glands in the groins at the top of your legs become swollen.

If you do not treat the sore it will go away by itself, but the germ gets into your blood and

stays there. After a few months the germ starts to spread in your body once more. This time you get sicker than before. You may get a headache, a fever, and feel tired, and your body becomes covered in a fine rash. This rash often comes out on the palms of your hands and the soles of your feet. Glands all over your body swell up. These glands feel like small lumps in your groins and under your arms. The rash and the glands do not hurt or make you feel itchy. You may get lots of warts around your vagina or your penis. If you get treatment the germ is destroyed, but if you do not get treatment the germ goes back into your blood and comes out again years later. It can then damage your heart and your brain. It can even kill you. If a pregnant woman gets syphilis, the germ is passed on to the baby who can be born very sick from the disease. Babies who are born with syphilis may even die from it.

The STD called chancroid

This disease is caused by another kind of germ. Like syphilis, it causes sores on the penis or vagina. It can be very difficult for a health worker to tell the difference between chancroid and syphilis, although chancroid sores are usually painful and syphilis sores are usually not painful. In chancroid, the glands in the groin become swollen and painful, and yellow pus may come out of them. Chancroid sores come out within a week of having sex with a person who is infected with chancroid.

The STD called herpes

Herpes causes tiny blisters on the penis or on the vagina. With herpes, the skin starts to feel itchy, and days later, the blisters grow. They may stay for a week to ten days. During this time it is dangerous to have sex, because with blisters it is easy to pass this disease on. In some people, the blisters never return. In other people, although the first herpes attack is the worst, the herpes blisters can keep coming back. Nobody can say when they will return, although attacks often happen when a herpes sufferer is under a lot of stress. If a pregnant woman has herpes blisters when she gives birth, the herpes germ can damage the baby. In this case the doctor would most likely perform a caesarian section operation so that the baby does not go down the birth canal and pass

through the herpes blisters.

What should you do if you think you have an STD?

If you think you have any one of these sicknesses, you must go to the clinic or your doctor as soon as you can. Many people like to go to a private doctor rather than to a clinic with an STD problem. This is because people often feel shy about the problem. Most doctors give the correct treatment for STDs. But some do not give the correct treatment because it is too expensive. So if you do go to a private doctor for treatment, try to ask her to give you the same treatment as you would get in the clinic. Usually the health worker will be able to tell you if you do have an STD, and which one it is, by looking at the sore. If the health worker is not sure which sore you have they may treat you for more than one of the STDs. If they think that you might have syphilis, but that it is hidden in your blood, they may do a blood test for syphilis. They will treat you for it at the same time.

If you think you have an STD you should stop having sex with other people until you have been cured. You will feel very bad if you pass an STD on to another person.

Treatment for STDs

The treatment for syphilis is penicillin injections. If penicillin makes you sick then you can have different kinds of pills instead. The treatment for chancroid is pills. There is no cure for herpes. But there is a cream, or pills that can stop the attack from becoming too severe if you use it early in the attack. Unfortunately this treatment for herpes is very expensive, and you cannot get it from public hospitals or clinics. A person who has herpes only passes it on from the beginning of the itchiness until the blisters have gone away completely.

How can we prevent STDs from spreading

If you only have one partner, and neither of you has an STD then you will not get an STD. The more people you sleep with, the more chance you have of sleeping with someone who has an STD. It is much safer to have one partner that you know well. It may be very hard for you to ask a new partner if he or she has an STD,

because people are very shy to talk about these things. But if you do ask and your partner is honest, you will save yourself a lot of trouble and worry. If you see that your partner has sores, do not sleep with him or her until they have been to a clinic or doctor for treatment. If you find out that you have an STD, no matter how hard it is, it is very important that you tell this to the person or people that you have had sex with. They can then also go for treatment. Sometimes they may have the disease but they have not noticed.

If people use condoms when they have sex, they can help to prevent the spread of these sexually transmitted diseases. It is important to stop the spread of STDs, not only because these illnesses make us sick, but also because people who have sores are more likely to spread the AIDS germ to each other through the open sores.

Health is our right!

We say that health is our right. And it is. But it is important to remember that health as a right starts at home. Each one of us has a right to know if our partner has an STD. And if you have an STD, it is your partner's right to know about it. One partner is better than many. Try to have safe sex, using condoms. Health is our right!

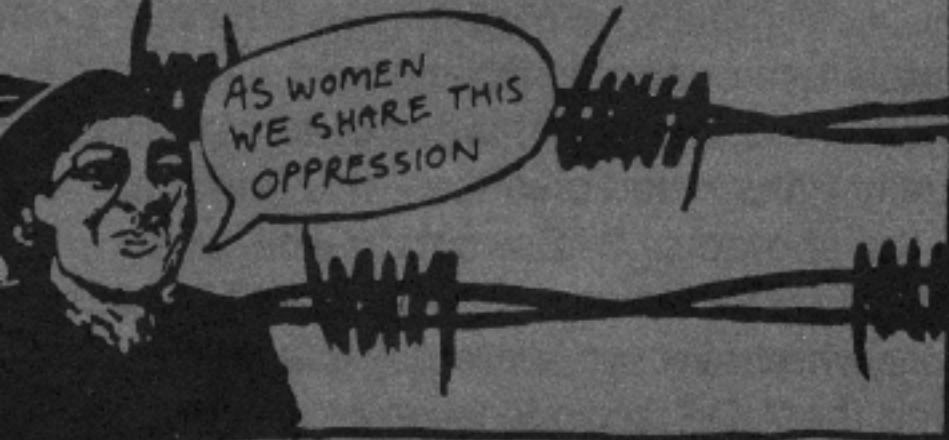
We have used a lot of the information for this article from New Nation's Learning Nation.



WHAT THE WOMENS CHARTER MEANS

IN 1954, 150 WOMEN FROM ALL OVER SOUTH AFRICA MET TO TALK ABOUT THE PROBLEMS THEY FACED AS WOMEN. THEIR IDEAS THEY PUT INTO A WOMENS CHARTER. LET'S LOOK AT THE CHARTER — MAYBE WE CAN LEARN FROM IT:

IN SOUTH AFRICA A FEW PEOPLE LIVE IN COMFORT BUT MOST OF US FACE POVERTY, HARDSHIP AND DISCRIMINATION



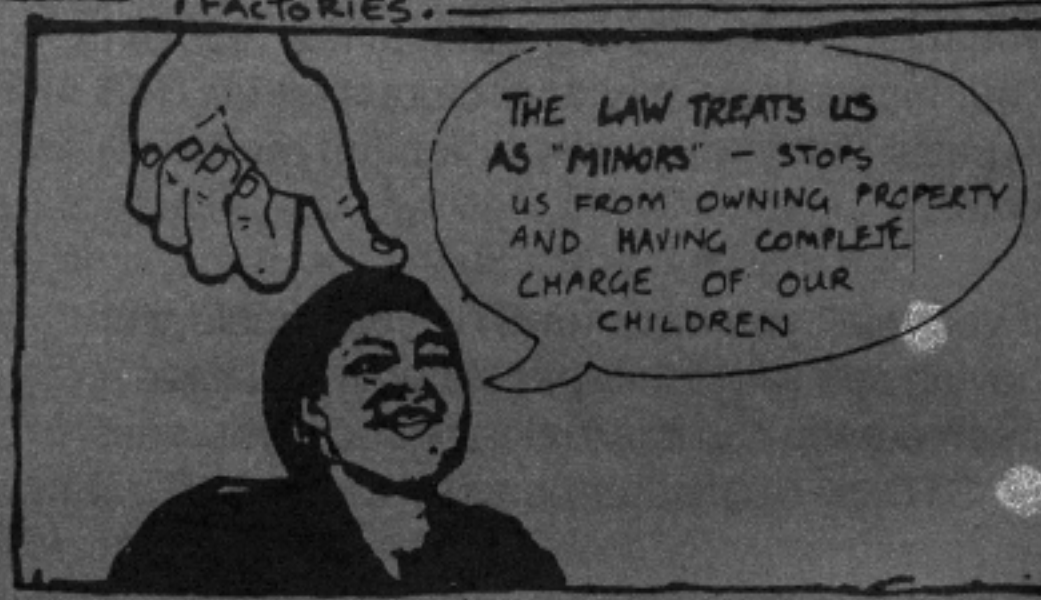
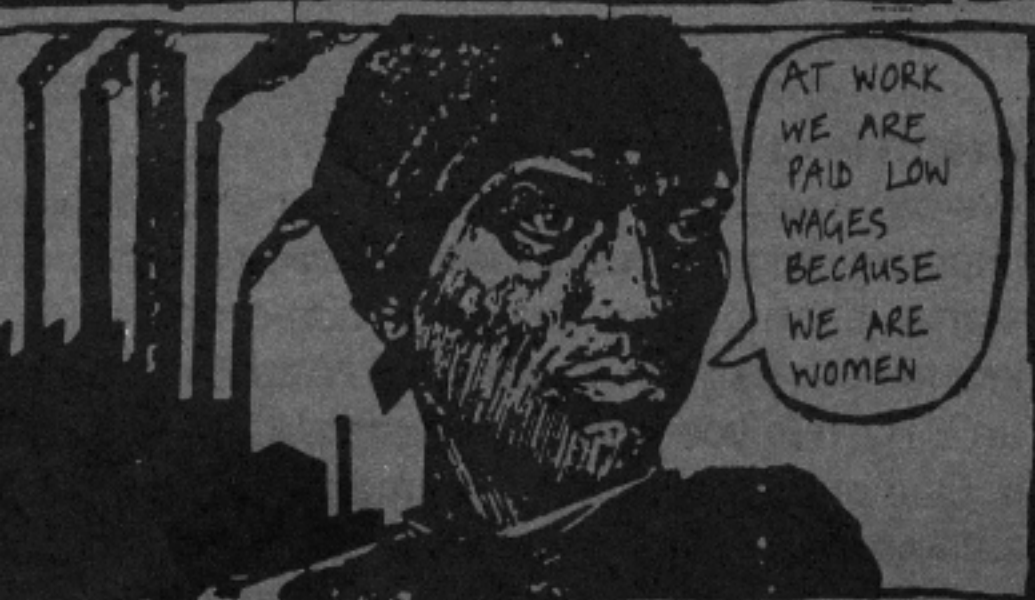
BUT THERE ARE LAWS AND PRACTICES THAT OPPRESS US AS WOMEN



WE HAVE TO MAKE SMALL WAGES STRETCH A LONG WAY



OFTEN WE HAVE TO DO THIS ALONE WHILE THE MEN GO OFF TO WORK IN THE MINES AND FACTORIES.



THESE PROBLEMS EXIST BECAUSE OUR SOCIETY IS DIVIDED INTO



WE CAN ONLY SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS BY STANDING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ALL FORMS OF OPPRESSION



OUR AIM MUST BE NATION-WIDE EDUCATION TO BRING HOME TO ALL MEN AND WOMEN THAT:

