

# SPEAK

S75.2

1990

No. 32

R1.00



**WORKERS ARE PARENTS TOO!**

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Cover photo: SPEAK

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SPEAK members are: Gill, Helen, Jacqueline, Karen, Nise, Phumelele, Shamim, Sponi, and Vanessa. We welcome Gill's new baby into the world and into our lives.

Published by SPEAK

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# SPEAK readers speak out!

Thanks to all of those people who have written to SPEAK. We encourage all of our readers to write in and share what they have to say.

## The pains of womanhood

Dear SPEAK

I wish to share my feelings with other women. Here is my poem. I felt very much inspired after reading your magazine. I also wish to send my fraternal greetings to the women who are behind SPEAK. May you continue tirelessly to feed us, for the women's cause, until every woman is free.

I feel the pains  
of womanhood  
like a mother who has  
miscarried a newborn baby.  
The milk in her breast never stops to drop.  
Why should I be silent  
when mothers in South Africa are deprived  
motherhood?  
I think of the many lost souls  
in Natal, and everywhere in the country.  
I weep in protest  
for our children.  
Why are we expected to be mute  
when we are made grass widows over the  
years?  
Our men languish in oppressors' gaols  
for heavensake can't you hear the women's  
voice?  
Crying out for Freedom! Freedom in our  
lifetime.  
from Winnie Morolo  
Soweto

Dear Winnie, your letter and poem have really touched us. Thank you.

### Words about lobola

Dear SPEAK

As one of your magazine readers, I'd like to say what I think about lobola in a post-apartheid South Africa. Our ancestors used cows and oxen for lobola. Then came the white man with capital. So this culture is still kept, although it has changed with the times. Why did lobola exist? It's a way of thanking the daughter's parents who brought her up and protected her from harm - so that she is politically and physically armed for her future and a good life.

Away from the lobola question, I want to say that I really feel that the message that SPEAK is passing to our society helps people to open their eyes, and hidden history is revealed.

Yours

N.M.P. Zonke  
Middelburg, Cape

Dear Comrade, thank you!

### Can our shop sell SPEAK?

Dear SPEAK

I read your magazine. I found it very much interesting, both politically, socially and otherwise. Now, my problem is, in the area where I live SPEAK is not easily found. There's a shop at home, and I wonder if the shop could sell your magazine? I want to pass on the message that I got from SPEAK to all the other peace-loving people of my community. I would be delighted to get a positive reply from SPEAK magazine.

Yours sincerely  
Raphael Mmisi  
Shoshanguve

Dear Raphael, thank you for your letter, and for your interest in getting SPEAK. We are sending a letter for you to hand over to the owner of the shop you talk about. After the owner answers, we hope we will be able to get SPEAK to your area by having it sold in the shop.

### The killings must stop!

Dear SPEAK

We can no longer fold our arms and sit back and watch the violence go on. Something urgent has to be done to stop this killing, the killing which is about to eat deep into every part of our society.

Comrade Nelson Mandela and church leaders made a call for peace. Women also made a call for peace. But there is more and more violence happening. We are aware that De Klerk's government is clever. We have seen it destabilise countries like Angola, Zimbabwe, and others. We must remember that during social change we shall have bandit-type movements.

We must, through our organisations, strive to end violence. Through our democratic and progressive organisations we must challenge De Klerk to end the violence. We must call for those in power to:

- \* disarm Inkatha
- \* dissolve the KwaZulu Police and government
- \* end the hostel and migratory labour system
- \* provide decent houses for all, at rents that people can afford
- \* encourage family life
- \* charge those who are responsible for the violence
- \* put education on the agenda

The violence that is happening does not help any people of our country. It holds back our struggle for liberation. Our unity is more important than our division. We must join hands and bring the violence to an end.

Forward to a new South Africa!

Viva the spirit of negotiations!

Morgan Gomati  
Meadowlands

Dear Morgan, thank you for your letter about this problem that concerns us all in South Africa.

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# Workers are parents too!

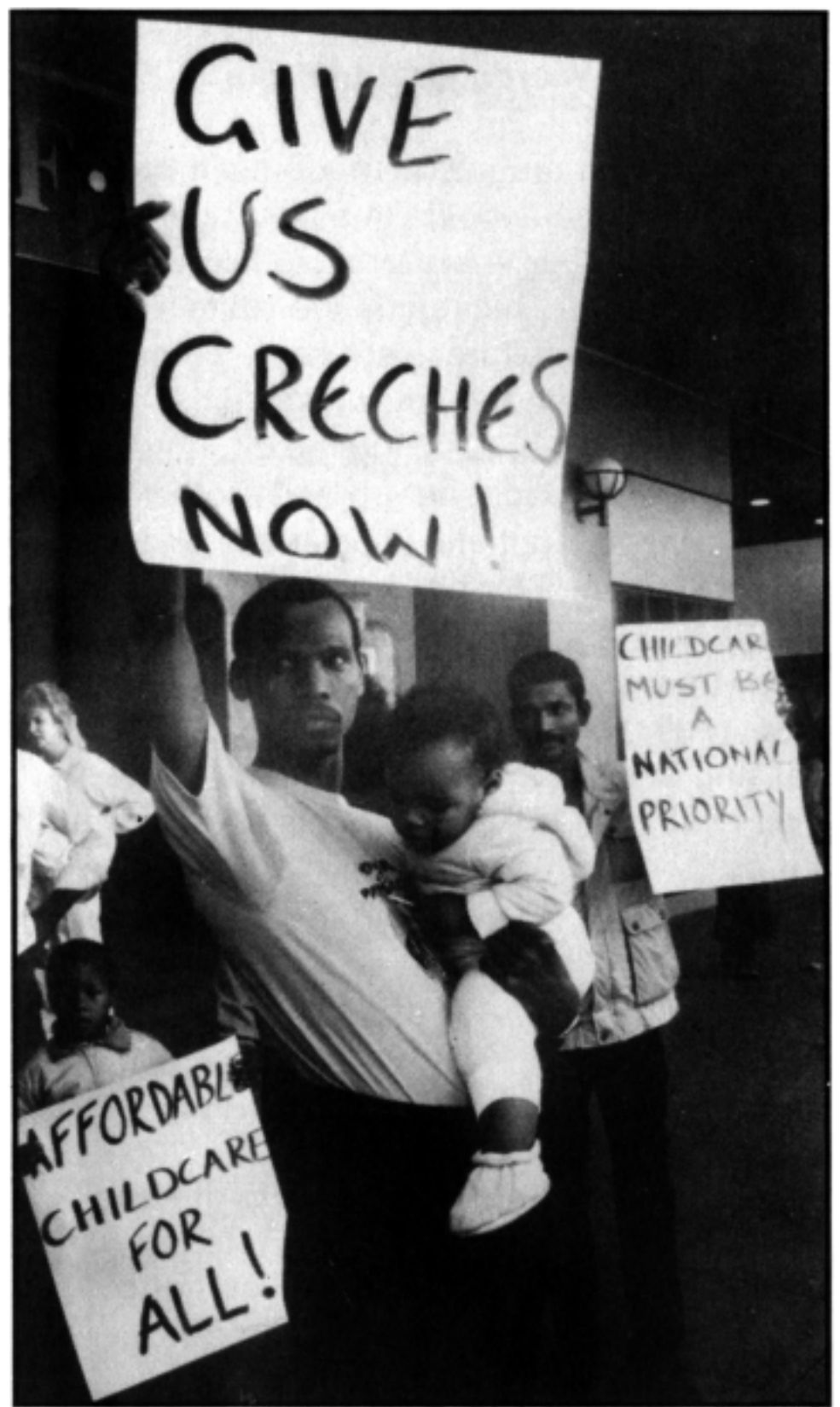
*Thursday 20 September 1990 was a very important and unusual day for workers, their children and the bosses. Thousands of children all over the country woke up at the same time as their parents. Together with their parents, they took the buses, trains and taxis that their mothers and fathers take every day to work. The bosses watched as the workers of today brought their children, the workers of tomorrow, through the factory gates. This planned day of action was part of COSATU's National Child Care Campaign.*

SPEAK asked Patrick Khumalo, a South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) shopsteward in Durban, from Hypermarket-by-the Sea, what the aim of the day of action was. He said: "We wanted to show the bosses that we are serious about fighting for our parental rights. We also wanted to say to them that we workers are parents too. And that our children lack proper care."

## **Fathers are parents too!**

The campaign does not only challenge the bosses. It challenges men workers as well: to give up the idea that the job of child care belongs to mothers alone. COSATU is saying that fathers are parents too.

As Susan Shabangu from Transport and General Workers' Union said: "Women carry the



**Workers are serious about fighting for child care for their children. COSATU National day of action around child care in Durban.**

Photo: New African

burden of looking after the children. If the teacher sends a note saying she wants to see the child's parents - the father will say it is the mother who should go. The same if the child is sick - it is the woman who is expected to see to the child. Firstly, it is seen as women's job to bring up the children. And secondly, a man thinks that he can't take time off work and risk his job, but its okay if the woman does this."

COSATU women feel very strongly that times must change. Maggie Magubane of National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) said: "It must not be said that child care is for women. Male parents must also be given time off by employers to care for their children." Both parents take part in bringing children into the world, so both parents must be responsible for caring for them.

We asked Templeton Namdo, chairperson of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) shopstewards committee at Lehmbeckers, a transport company outside Jo'burg, if he thought the day of action had made men think about their role as parents. He said: "I think that today's action will lead men to be more interested in our kids in the future. As men we don't know how to raise children. We have a lot to learn."

Many men workers took part in the day of action. We asked Patrick Khumalo if this meant a change in attitude of men who think that child care is only for women. He said: "Men have realised that child care is also their responsibility. We have included a demand for paternity leave in our national negotiation for parents rights. Men were right in the forefront of that struggle. Our struggle is not just with the bosses. It is also about changing backward attitudes in the home."

SACCAWU also believes that good paternity agreements improve the relationship between fathers and mothers, and fathers and their children.

### **Why take children to work?**

On the day of action COSATU wanted to bring the child care problem facing workers right under the bosses' noses.

There are very few creches and pre-schools in black townships. Those that do exist are often expensive. Many of them are overcrowded, with few toys and educational things to do and with few qualified teachers. Children need proper care. From an early age, children want to, and need to, play and learn. The early years are very important for their future lives. Creches for all children should be available, not as dumping grounds, but as places where children can play and learn.

But good creches for black children rarely exist. So, many parents are forced to get help with child care from their families or take their child to a child-minder. Many parents are not happy with the kind of care that their children get. Some children are left to roam the streets during the day. Anything could happen to them.

Workers worry about their children while they are at work.

As one woman worker said: "I worry about my children all day. I know the aunty I leave them with doesn't give them the food I leave for them."

Workers are saying that it is time that the bosses take on some of the responsibility of child care.

### **COSATU Campaign for parental rights and child care**

In South Africa, unions have taken up the demand for decent maternity and paternity benefits. Many unions now negotiate these benefits at the same time as they demand higher wages. In many companies rights for pregnant women workers have been won. But not all women workers in factories, homes and farms have the right to maternity benefits and jobs back.



Workers at Lehmbeckers make their point! As Maggie Magubane said: "It must not be said that child care is for women. Male parents must also be given time off to care for their children." Photo: Tammy Shefer

Unions are saying that the responsibility for children does not end after maternity and paternity leave. COSATU believes that the state and bosses should take some responsibility for child care. SACCAWU says: "Up until now bosses have, at best, only recognized the need for women to have time off to give birth and make child care arrangements. Then they expect women to come back to work and leave any problems they have with their children at home."

They ignore the fact that workers have families. That parents need be able to care for their children when they are sick. And be able to go to see teachers at their children's schools. Bosses do not give their workers a chance to be parents too. Now the demand for child care is on the agenda.

"If we want to build a new South Africa with equal opportunities for all, then we must start at the cradle," says SACCAWU.

The unions are also saying that child care should be the responsibility of both parents. When they fought for maternity benefits, they fought for paternity benefits too. They are doing the same thing making demands for child care. A Transport and General Workers' Union

shopsteward, Sibongile Masangwane, said: "When we are talking about child care, we are saying that even the male comrades must have things to do with the child. We are not the only ones responsible for the child just because we are mothers."

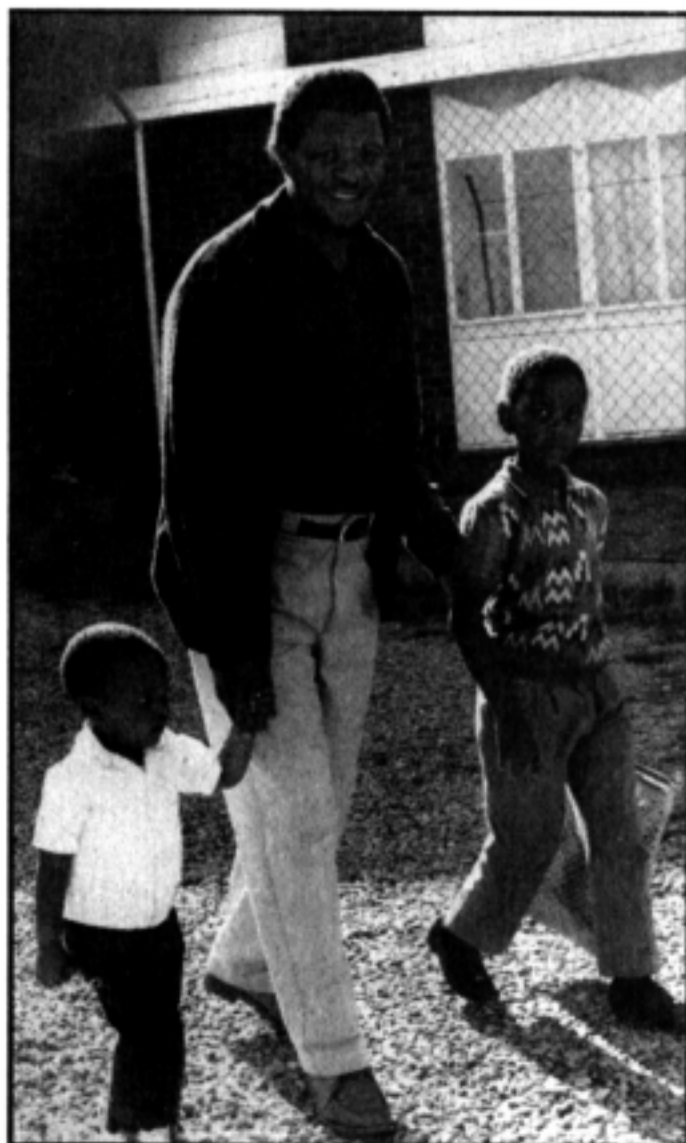
### What is COSATU demanding?

The day of action is the beginning of an ongoing campaign around child care. COSATU is making these demands:

- \* special paid leave of 20 days each year to take care of the children when, for example, they are sick or have problems at school
- \* creche facilities
- \* special child allowance from the state for unemployed workers with children (because Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) does not give them more money if they have children)
- \* the right to a family life

The COSATU child care campaign wants:

- \* To raise the issue of child care with employers and the public in general.
  - \* To ensure that child care demands are part of living wage demands which are negotiated at plant and national levels.
  - \* To get workers and employers to accept that child care should be a social responsibility.
- COSATU also says that it should not be the



Workers at Propan in Wadeville, outside Johannesburg, arrived at work with babies on backs, and children in hand on the COSATU day of action. Photos: COSATU





**SACCAWU workers make demands around child care outside the shops in the streets of Durban.**

Photo: New African

responsibility of women alone and it should not be privatised.

### **But can they do it everyday?**

Bosses responded in different ways to the day of action and the demands for child care. Some of the bosses put on a party - sweets and toys, games and playing. Maybe for that day some children didn't understand why their parents fight with those nice bosses! But when they grow up they will understand the importance of their parents' struggle for good child care everyday. They will understand that one day of fun at the factory is not as important as good education in creches and pre-schools everyday.

Some bosses did not like the idea of workers bringing their children to work. At Nissan in Rosslyn, outside Pretoria, workers were locked out of the factory with their children and had to go home. At the Clicks store in Westville, outside Durban, the police were called.

Some bosses saw the banners and heard the songs of the workers and realized that the workers are serious about their demands.

One boss, Mr Lehmbecker said: "I feel encouraged that the workers do a thing like this - workers have their children at home and they

need creches. The state should be responsible for child care, but in our case, private companies should also do something. We will certainly put aside some funds towards a creche in some way."

### **Way forward**

COSATU unions will start to bring demands for child care into their negotiations. NUMSA and TGWU, as well as other unions, have already started with the demand for 20 days paid leave each year to see to children. Many unions are thinking about ways in which the bosses can take some responsibility for child care.

Workers and their unions have a lot of work to do. Workers will have to decide what they want from the bosses. For example, should a creche be at the workplace or in the community? Or should the bosses give workers money each month towards child care costs? SACCAWU's Foschini workers have just won a deal on child care. Foschini workers will get a R620.00 payment for child care a year.

The struggle to get the bosses to see workers as parents is a long one. And so is the struggle to get men to share responsibility for their children. The COSATU day of action is just the beginning.

# Fighting for democracy!

## the call for a Constituent Assembly

*Talks about talks are going on between the ANC and the government. The ANC is building the road towards negotiating a new constitution for a new South Africa. It is not an easy road to build, especially with the war that is going on in our country. But South Africa badly needs a new and democratic constitution so that we can bury the apartheid constitution once and for all. It is important that all South Africans are part of building this new South Africa. The new constitution must have in it the ideas, hopes and wishes of the South African people.*

### **What is a constitution?**

A constitution is a very important document. Most organisations have a constitution. A constitution says what the organisation believes in and how the organisation will run. It is usually written down.

The constitution of a country works in the same way. It is about how the government must work or run. For example, the constitution will say what kind of economy the country will have, what the duties of government officials will be, and the limits on the powers of government officials. Up until now, the whites of this country have decided how the country should be run. It is time to change this. Writing a new, just constitution is a step towards change.

It is from a constitution that many countries' laws are made. The constitution of a country is about the rights of citizens in that country.

### **The South African Constitution**

At present South Africa has a Tricameral Parliament. It is called this because it has three houses of parliament, one each for whites, 'coloureds' and Indians. This system was started in 1984 with a new constitution. This Parliament, as we all know, is racist and cuts out the great majority of the country's people.

### **ANC has ideas about a new constitution**

The ANC has ideas about what the future South African constitution should have in it. The ANC has put these ideas down in a document called the ANC's Draft Constitutional Guidelines. It is a document for all South Africans to study and discuss. This document says things like:

- \* All the people of the country will elect who governs them.
- \* South Africa will belong to all its people.
- \* There will be one parliament which will make the laws of the country.
- \* The courts, the army, and the police will serve all the people. Their job will be to protect the people and the constitution.
- \* Women will have the same rights as men at home, at work and in the community.

These are just a few things that the ANC's Draft Constitutional Guidelines say.

People must think about what they want in a new constitution. As ANC leader, Penuell Maduna said: "Our people must tell leaders what type of constitution they want."



## How to go about getting a new constitution?

There are different ways of getting a new constitution. One of the problems right now is that not all of the political parties agree on how it should be done. The ANC, PAC and Azapo agree that the best and most democratic way to draw up a new constitution is to hold a Constituent Assembly. But the Nationalist Party, and others, like Inkatha, would rather have a National Convention.

## What is a National Convention?

At a National Convention, leaders of all the political parties in a country meet to work out a new constitution. After they have done this, they ask the people of the country to vote for or against it. But the problem with this way is who decides who should meet at a National Convention. You could get people who have no real support from the people. We know of many puppet leaders in South Africa. We also hear many people claiming great support, but never being able to prove it. Those who believe in real democracy believe that we should have a Constituent Assembly - so that we have only real leaders who have grassroots support at the negotiating table.

## A Constituent Assembly

The ANC, PAC, and Azapo believe that the best way of finding out which political parties have

support, is by having free, non-racial elections for a Constituent Assembly. These elected parties then meet to negotiate and draw up a constitution. All political organisations will be allowed to take part in this election. You could have ANC, Azapo, PAC, Nationalist Party, Conservative Party all fighting to win in the same area! All citizens over the age of 18 years will have the right to vote. It will be one person, one vote.

## How will the Constituent Assembly be elected?

It is not clear how the Constituent Assembly will be elected. There are two ways this can be done. The one way is to elect by constituency. The other is by national vote.

### Election by constituency

Election by constituency means that leaders of different political parties will stand for elections in the area in which they live. This area is called a constituency. Everybody in that area will vote for the leader they like. The leader who wins the most votes will go to the Constituent Assembly to represent the people of that area.

### Election by national vote

Election by national vote means different political parties will fight for votes in the whole country. Everybody in the country will vote for



**Marching forward to People's Power. But it is time now to put serious thought into what governing for and by the people really means.** Photo: Afrapix



**Namibian women waiting to vote in Namibian elections in November 1989.** Photo: Afrapix

the political party they like. Those parties with the most votes will go to the Constituent Assembly. The more votes a political party gets, the more seats they will win on the Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly shows who the most popular political parties are in the country.

### **What does the government want?**

The government says 'no' to a Constituent Assembly. They say this way the majority will have more say than the minority. That means blacks will have more power than whites. They want to meet behind closed doors and draw up a new constitution. Then they want to take the constitution to a white referendum. This means whites will vote to say if they like the new constitution or not. The government says it is worried about the rights of minority groups, like whites.

But the government is really worried that in a free and fair election it will not get enough votes and will lose some of its power.

The government is also aware that in the elections, its 'friends' - some homeland leaders, for example - may not get many votes and their power will also be reduced. The government would rather write out a constitution before any election. It also wants all parties to have equal representation - whether there is proof of any support for them or not - when the constitution is debated. This is not democracy.

But it is important that a wide range of political parties take part in the Constituent Assembly.

As Jeremy Cronin of the South Africa Communist Party said: "It is important to make sure that smaller parties take part in a Constituent Assembly. This is because we want the constitution to have the support of all the people."

### **Why a Constituent Assembly?**

Zola Skweyiya is the Director of the ANC's Department of Legal and Constitutional Affairs and also the chairperson of the ANC's Constitutional Committee. He explained why his organisation is calling for a Constituent Assembly.

Skweyiya said: "For a change, the constitution must come from the people themselves. Our people must elect those people they trust and have faith in to sit on the Constituent Assembly."

Skweyiya believes that educating the people about making a constitution is important so that they can have a say in how the country will be run. He said: "The ANC has set up a Constitutional Committee which will organise seminars, debates and educational workshops around the constitution. Many people in this country have never been involved in any constitution-making. Therefore, we must educate them in order to improve their knowledge and understanding of a constitution."

### **Who should supervise the elections for this Constituent Assembly?**

It is important that it is decided who should supervise the elections for a Constituent Assembly. This is another hot issue for political parties. But the ANC is clear on this. Said Skweyiya: "Our position is that an interim government accepted by all the parties should be set up to run the country during the transitional period of constitution making."

An interim government is a government that will rule the country until a new constitution is drawn up.

"We cannot be expected to simply believe that the National Party will be neutral during the transitional period while it still runs the country, controls the army and the police, and the South

African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)," Skweyiya said.

### **Problems along the way**

It may soon be the first time that the majority of South Africans have ever had the chance to vote for the political party that they want to have rule the country. Before it has only been the whites, and more recently, a few 'coloured' and Indian people who have voted in the Tricameral Parliament. It is exciting, but things will not be easy.

First of all, with the terrible war going on in our country at the moment, it is hard to imagine having free and fair elections. It is important that elections happen when people are really free to vote without fear of intimidation.

It is important to remember that 12 million people in our country cannot read and write, and that millions of South Africans have never voted before. It is important that people are not tricked or fooled in any way because of this.

It is also important that all South Africans are kept informed about what is going on with the talks about talks, and every step that is taken along the road. Very often some of the

documents telling us about talks and negotiations are written in a very high language that only lawyers can really understand. It is important that these documents are written in a way that ordinary people can understand - this may mean that they will need to be translated into many languages. We do not want only those who have been to university to be the ones who can decide on the constitution of the country. It is our country and we have a right to have a say in how it is run.

### **A challenge for women**

For women, the time ahead is a challenge. Women must stand up and be part of making a constitution. A constitution that gives hope for women. Women must make sure that they know what is going on. They must make their voices heard by saying this new South Africa belongs to them as well. They must not leave all the political discussions to the men. Women must be part of politics. And it is also up to the leaders of democratic organisations and political parties, who are mostly men, to take up the challenge to make sure that women are taken as seriously politically as men.

Thanks to Active Voice and Learn and Teach for some of the information used in this article.



**Women must take up the challenge to be a real part of making a new non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South African constitution.**

Photo: Afrapix

# More letters!

## Keep on keeping on!

Dear SPEAK

I've been meaning to write to you for months now, to say congratulations for such a great magazine - just keep on keeping on - we are very proud of your team!

All the very best sisters!

Gcina Mhlophe  
Newtown  
Johannesburg

Dear Gcina, many thanks for your support!

## SPEAK is number one!

Dear SPEAK

It is a great pleasure to write a letter to you comrades. I am a reader of your magazine and I would like to tell you that your magazine is number one politically, and most especially when we come to the women's struggle.

We do not get enough SPEAK's in my area. So could you please make me a full-time seller of your magazine? If you send SPEAK then I will sell it to the people, and then I will send the money to you.

Comrades, please discuss this letter and let me know, I'm free all the time.

Yours Ciom  
Welkom

Dear Ciom, we would be very happy for you to sell SPEAK. This is how we do it: you can either collect SPEAKs at our offices or we can post them to you. This year the magazine costs R1.00, and sellers pay us 80 cents for each copy. You must also pay half the postage costs. Send us a postal order or a cheque for the number of magazines you want and then we will send you the magazines. We look forward to hearing from you!

SPEAK is looking for interested people to sell our magazine. If you are interested, reliable, and enjoy relating to people, then please contact us for more details on our bulk rate. Write to us at: SPEAK, P.O. Box 45213, Mayfair, 2018, Johannesburg, South Africa. Or phone us at (011) 296166.

## I want to sell SPEAK

Dear SPEAK

I'm interested in selling SPEAK magazine. This is why I want to do this:

1. As a SPEAK subscriber I have found that most people are interested in reading this magazine. But it is difficult for them to get it because they are staying in rural areas.
2. I have found that this magazine is very important in making people aware, as well as for organising women. If SPEAK could get to the people, they would be able to read what other women and comrades say.
3. Most people are unable to subscribe because of the cost, but if they know where to get the magazine at a lower price per copy, they will want to buy it.
4. As an executive member of Bohlabela Branch of NEUSA (National Education Union of South Africa) I would be of help in selling and distributing SPEAK to our people.
5. Lastly, I think as a lecturer, I would be able to sell the magazine to the lecturing staff as well as to the students.

I'm prepared to sell SPEAK and therefore I would like to get more information about how to do this.

Thank you  
Yours faithfully  
Kgaphola M.P.  
Burgersfort

Dear Kgaphola M.P., thank you for your letter. We would like it very much if you sold SPEAK in your area. Please let us know how many copies of SPEAK you would like to sell and we can then give you more information about how you can sell SPEAK.





**Women take a stand against the violence and killings taking place in the country. A delegation of women from Women Against Repression (WAR) in Johannesburg went to the Pretoria Union Buildings to hand in a memorandum about the violence to the State President, F.W. De Klerk.**

Photo: Afrapix

## **Skin lightening creams - banned at last!**

Skin lighteners have been banned at last! Shops are not allowed to sell skin lightening creams anymore.

Progressive organisations and doctors have been fighting for these creams to be banned for many years. At last they have won. Many black people have skin that is damaged forever because of these creams. This is caused by the chemical, called hydroquinone, that skin lighteners have in them. The skin lightening cream bosses have got rich out of apartheid - where people have been made to believe that fair-skin is more beautiful than dark-skin. If you see any skin lighteners with hydroquinone in them at the shops tell the owner to get rid of them because they are bad for our health! We don't want them anymore!

## **World AIDS Day!**

**1 December 1990**

Rich people get AIDS, poor people get AIDS. Babies, men and women, black and white, get AIDS. More and more people are getting AIDS. AIDS is a killer disease. There is no cure for it. Health workers in South Africa and all over the world are very worried about the way AIDS is spreading. Organisations are getting serious about stopping the spread of AIDS.

There is a way. It is called 'safe sex.' Having safe sex prevents the spread of AIDS. And all you need for safe sex is a condom. You can get them free from Family Planning Clinics, or you can buy them at a chemist.

Watch out for World AIDS Day events - join in the campaign to keep South Africans alive!

# Sister, we blee

*Shelley Sacks is an artist. She lives and works in Johannesburg. But she spent many years in Cape Town as well. She is committed to a new South Africa that is free of exploitation and oppression. Her drawings and paintings are about this. But Shelley does not just paint for herself. She also teaches art. And she makes posters and T-shirts with progressive organisations, like trade unions. She has also worked with co-operatives.*

## **Artists must share**

Shelley believes artists should share what they know. She believes art should not be something that only a few, for example, the rich should make or have.

Shelley said: "For many years I refused to make art, because it seemed like a thing that you only did by yourself, and a thing that only the rich could do. So I spent many years struggling to find a way to make art that would be for more people. And also to find ways for more people to make art."

## **Women are artists**

Shelley believes that women are artists in their daily lives. She said that women have it in them to make art, but often they do not know it.

She said: "Most women use all their creative energy making wonderful artwork of their children. They put all their love, vision, time and energy into looking after children. And cleaning and making a home. And all that is the same creative energy that makes a person into an artist."

But often child care and housework make it difficult for women to do other things. Shelley said this happened to her. "I only really made a lot of art before I had children," she said, "and once I had children I could see how much harder it is for women to make art."

## **Teaching art**

Shelley worked for a year with a pre-school project. She worked with the women who take care of children - the child-minders. She spoke about how she worked.

She said: "Instead of teaching child-minders how to teach children art, I let the child-minders find their own artistic feeling by doing their own art. In this way the child-minders came to know that they have art inside themselves. And this made them able to do wonderful things with the children."

In teaching art, Shelley tried to help people bring out what is inside them.

She said: "I would try and show people when you have got an idea you have to hold that in your mind and you have to struggle to make that real. You struggle with the material, the paint, the people, the resources. You struggle to make it come alive."

## **A wonderful painting**

One of Shelley's paintings is called 'Sister, we bleed and we sing.' She spoke about how she got the idea for this painting.

She said: "It was painted when I was in quite a painful state. It was when Crossroads, in Cape Town, had been burning. It was during 1986. For months it was winter and people had been turned out of their homes. Their houses were broken down. The vigilantes, called the witdoeke, were attacking.

I had quite a few friends who lived in Crossroads. And I kept seeing them or hearing from them. It felt like people were so torn. Most of the people I knew were mothers. They were not very old, but they had kids who were old enough to be involved in all the action in the streets. And a lot of people were getting killed. Children were getting killed."

# d and we sing



Shelley's painting called 'Sister, we bleed and we sing.'



**Shelley believes that women are artists in their daily lives.**



**But often housework and child care make it difficult for women to make art.**

Photos: SPEAK



**"Artists must share," says Shelley Sacks.**



**You have to struggle to make your art come alive.**

### **A funeral**

Shelley's painting is around a funeral during this time. She said: "I was thinking about a person who had to go and mourn her child. She supported the struggle. And at the funeral she stood by while this child was glorified and praised. And yet she was losing her child."

The pain of this woman stayed with Shelley. And she wanted to put this feeling into a painting. She said: "It was a friend of mine's birthday. This friend was a social worker who worked with detainees and ex-detainees. I wanted to make her a present. I remember closing my eyes and all I could feel while I closed my eyes was this need to sing and to wail at the same time. And I just sat, and I remember sitting for a long time with my eyes

closed. I remembered the people I had seen. And it was always women of all cultures. Women with their arms outstretched, wailing, wailing, crying and yet singing, longing, calling. I tried to paint that moment to tell that to this woman who was my friend. And only after I'd given it to her, I saw this painting was saying something that I wanted to say to lots of people. All her friends, everyone was so excited about it. I decided to copy this picture."

Shelley spoke about how she felt. "I was so happy afterwards," she said, "we made 1000 posters and they were distributed mainly through organisations. Somewhere a thousand people - and I like to know that - somewhere a thousand people, maybe not all women, have got that poster or have seen it."



# Umlazi women are waking up!

A group of women from Umlazi township, outside Durban, have come together in a group called Phaphama Club. 'Phaphama' means 'wake up!' These women are neighbours. They meet once a month to discuss their problems and how they can deal with them. They also share their happiness and their sadness with each other. Since these women started meeting together, two of them have had babies. They collected money to buy baby clothes. They went to visit each other and they indeed shared their happiness. This also gave them time to talk to each other.

## Time to learn

SPEAK asked one of the women what she thinks of her involvement in the Phaphama Club. She said: "Coming together has given us a chance to learn about different things. We have organised workshops. One workshop was about child abuse. We called a social worker to tell us about this. Another workshop was about women and the law. We asked a lawyer to tell us how the South African law sees women. Slowly we will learn about other things which affect women."

Phaphama Club has decided to have such workshops on every third Sunday of each month.

## A great shock

The workshop about women and the law was attended by many women from Umlazi. A woman lawyer from KwaMashu came to give a talk on this important issue. The Umlazi women

got a great shock. They found out that the law does very little about protecting the interests of married women. In fact, a married woman is treated as a child. The law gives the husband the right to make very important decisions for his wife.

One woman said: "I cannot believe how unfair the law is towards women. What are we going to do about this?"

Another woman said: "Well, there is much talk about a new South Africa. It is up to us to make sure that these unjust laws go so that South Africa will be new for women as well."

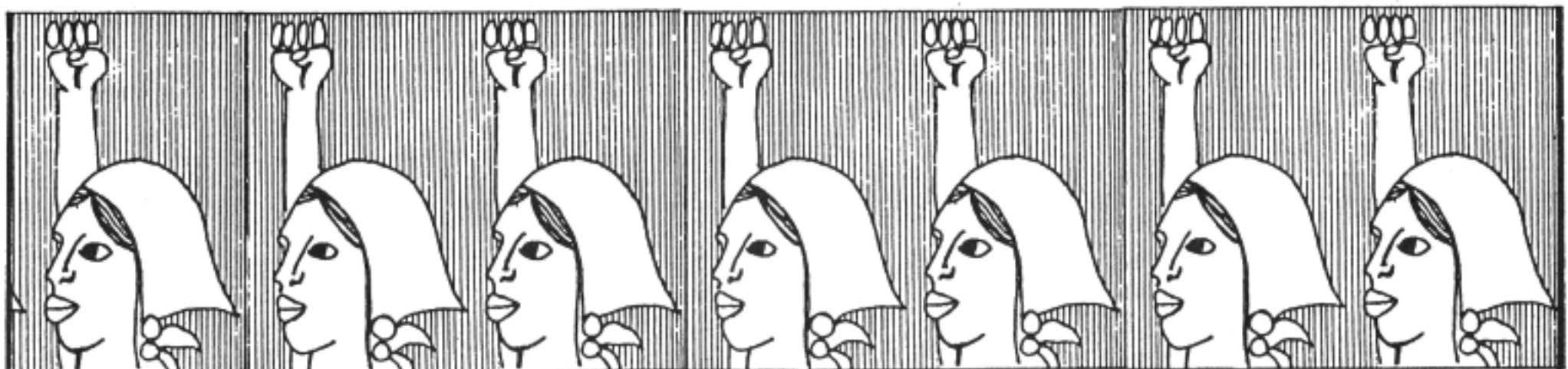
## South Africa needs a new non-sexist law

The women have decided that they must help make sure that a future South Africa has laws that do not discriminate against women. They also feel strongly that it is the women's responsibility to make sure this happens. "But how are we going to make sure this happens?" asked one woman.

Another woman answered her. She said: "Let us come together. Bring in more women next time. We must share ideas. If we do not do that we will be left behind."

## An important step

Women of Phaphama Club have taken a very important step. Women have always been left behind, locked in their houses by housework and child care. Knowing about their rights gives women the confidence to challenge things when they go wrong, and to challenge unfair laws.



# Alexandra Women's Congress

## organising women for a new South Africa

Sizakele Nkosi is the General Secretary of Alexandra Women's Congress (AWCO), in Alexandra township, or Alex, as it is called. Alex is just outside Johannesburg. Sizakele believes that women must fight for their rights. Most of all, Sizakele sees the importance of people organising at the grassroots to build strong organisations that will fight for a better life for all. She spoke to SPEAK about Alexandra Women's Congress.

### Organising women in Alex

An old woman comrade Thoko Mngoma, who was in the ANC Women's League and Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) in the 1950's, was an inspiration in forming women's organisation. Sizakele said: "We felt that our women, especially the older women, were not organised. Even in civic issues. We felt that women are more affected than men by high rents and high bus fares. We felt that women need to organise to fight problems."

Getting women to join the organisation was not an easy job. But the women who decided to start Alexandra Women's Organisation went to find the women of Alex.

Sizakele said: "We visited churches, stokvels, burial societies, trying to recruit." Their job was made even harder because this was during the State of Emergency when the police and the army were in the township harrassing and detaining people. Most of the women trying to build the women's organisation were detained in 1986. Sizakele was one of those detained.

Sizakele was detained for 18 months, but she and other women comrades who were released came back with a stronger fighting spirit.

She said: "When we came back from detention, we thought we would start afresh. We gave ourselves six months of organising, before launching the Alexandra Women's Congress. But members wanted to organise a launch and have a democratically elected leadership sooner, so we launched in four months - in March 1990. We changed our constitution and we were no longer Alex Women's Organisation. Since then we have grown from strength to strength as Alex Women's Congress."

### Why organise women?

Sizakele feels very strongly that women must be organised. She spoke about this: "If you look at the participation of women in organisations it is very low. Women don't participate equally with men. They feel intimidated and inferior because of their background. Women are treated as inferior by organisations and society. There are few women in executives of organisations. And when they are there, they hold sexist positions, like secretaries. It is the same with the unions."

Sizakele went on to say: "Women need to be groomed in women's organisations. To be mentally liberated. Women are also human beings, and must fight to be treated as human beings, before being taken as women. There is lots of sexism. We can't only blame apartheid. Men who think they are liberated will not allow their wives to get involved in organisations. These men are in meetings a lot. They are hardly at home. It is not right that only South African men decide on the future of South Africa. I don't want men talking about sexism on our behalf."

### Problems that women face

Sizakele feels that women's issues have to be

taken up in all organisations - not only by women's organisations. She said: "Even in the factories women are the first to be retrenched. Bosses use sexual exploitation. Men are exploited for their labour. Women are exploited for their labour and their bodies. Women always feel under threat. There is no job security with pregnancy. Pregnancy is treated like a curse."

### **Alexandra Women's Congress**

Alex Women's Congress is made up of a number of groups. And it allows individuals to join as well. The groups include Eyethu Burial Society, church groups and the women's committee of the Self-Help Association of Disabled of Alexandra. There are also individual white women from Randburg. Gay men (men who have men as lovers) are allowed to join.

Sizakele said: "We encourage male comrades, for example, gay men to join. They are not full members, but they can attend general meetings. They don't have voting rights in the organisation. We believe that those people are our children. My child could grow up to live a gay life, and we cannot reject those people."

AWCO is open to young women from the age of fourteen years. The organisation meets once a week. Sizakele said: "We all meet every Saturday afternoon - everyone can come to

these meetings. But women who work in supermarkets can only meet every two weeks. So sometimes there are more and sometimes less women who attend. The membership is growing, especially because of the unbanning of organisations. Most of the meetings are well-attended by about 100 women."

There are four branches of Alex Women's Congress in Alex. All four of them are named after women heroes: Helen Joseph, Onika Masheko, Thoko Mngoma, Lilian Ngoyi. Each branch meets once a week.

### **Political education is important**

AWCO believes that political education for women is very important. And they talk openly about politics in the organisation so that women can become involved in the struggle for a non-racist, non-sexist, democratic South Africa. Sizakele spoke about this. She said: "We have a lot of political education. We discuss what is happening in the country, like the constituent assembly, negotiations, the talks about talks, the Groote Schuur minute. Women must join us because they've joined the struggle to fight injustice in South Africa. It is very exciting. We are not like other groups who are only interested in child-minding projects. With us, people come for political reasons. There are many issues that we discuss, to encourage



**Sizakele said: "Women need to be groomed in women's organisations. To be mentally liberated. Women must fight to be treated as human beings, before being taken as women."**



**"There is lots of sexism. We can't only blame apartheid," says Sizakele Nkosi of Alexandra Women's Congress.**

Photos: SPEAK

women to be involved in the struggle for a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa." AWCO sees that it is important that women get involved in all types of organising work. Sizakele said: "We encourage women to be involved in civics, youth, and student structures."

Sizakele said that women discuss the problems they face as women. She said: "We share our experiences. Not all women are exploited in the same way. It is different with different husbands. There are women who have been raped. There are women with problems with child-care."

### **Other activities**

Women pay R2.00 a year to join AWCO. AWCO fights for better housing and helps out if there are evictions. AWCO is also involved in the advice centre in the township, as well as in the education crisis. Sizakele says that women feel that it is worth the R2.00.

### **Health work**

The women are involved in the problems of the township, like for example, health issues. They give support to the Alex Health Clinic. Sizakele said: "Whenever there are problems that the clinic needs help with, our women help. There was a polio problem in 1986 and again in 1989. Women helped to immunise (give injections to) the children on a yard to yard basis. People are not suspicious of comrades coming to immunise their children, unlike if it is done by others."

### **An AIDS committee**

AWCO is very concerned about the problem of AIDS. Sizakele said: "AWCO has got an AIDS committee. It is made up of 10 women who are trained about AIDS by the Alex Health Centre and University Clinic. We felt that we should start workshops in Alex to educate people about AIDS. We have already found 6 people who are AIDS victims. So far, from our survey, one male adult has died, and a newborn baby. Two are going into the semi-AIDS state, with blisters and that. We have to talk about AIDS."

AWCO wants the community to be aware that AIDS is killing people and that AIDS can be prevented. They talk to women and men in Alex about the importance of having safe sex by using condoms. But this is not easy. Sizakele said: "Women have accepted that there is AIDS. But men do not. This is a serious problem because men do not want to use condoms. They do not want to take responsibility. At the Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) clinic there are many more men than women who have STDs. AIDS is not different to STD's. Men do sleep around a lot and are not prepared to take precautions."

### **Young Pioneers**

Some AWCO members are involved in training young school children after school. Children from the age of four to fourteen years old come together as Young Pioneers. Sizakele spoke

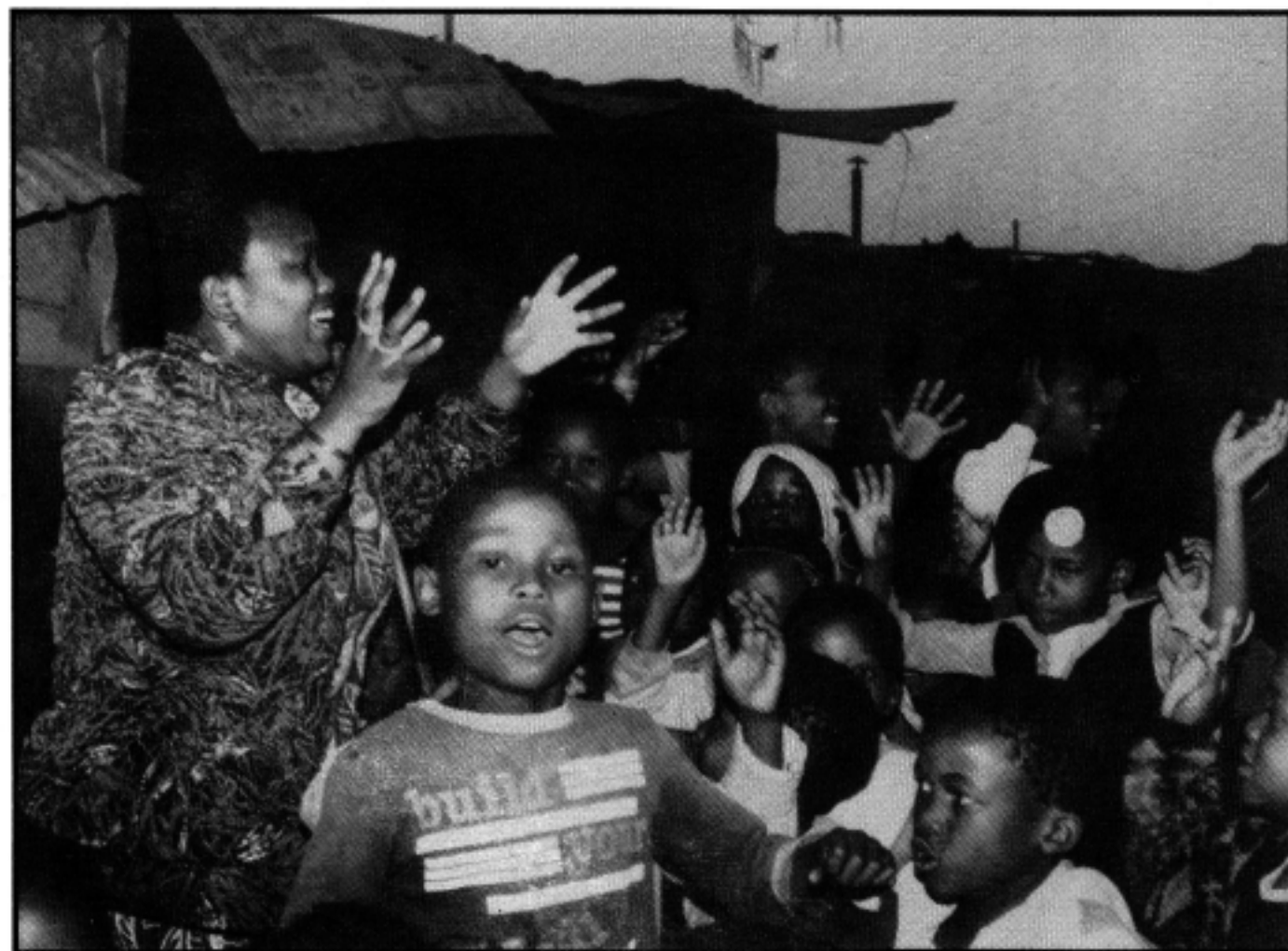


Photo: SPEAK

**Sizakele sings a song with the Young Pioneers in Alex, teaching non-sexism and non-racism to the youth.**

about this. She said: "Ma Tshabalala is the woman from our organisation who is training children as pioneers in the after-school care. They always have games that are progressive. Instead of say, hide and seek, they will say something for the struggle. Our children should also know about our leaders. Those who are well-known and those who are not."

### **ANC Women's League**

Sizakele spoke about the AWCO and the ANC Women's League. She said that AWCO will soon disband and form the ANC Women's League. At the same time they are trying to form a co-ordinating group of all the women's organisations in Alex, so that all women's organisations, both ANC and not ANC will continue to meet together.

Sizakele said: "We are encouraging women to join the ANC. We are not forcing anyone to join. They must be people who are willing to join."

### **Future for women**

Sizakele believes that women have to take up many struggles, both in their political lives and in their personal lives. She said: "I hope that women will be independent - we should not think that we should get married to get security. We must not live in the shadow of someone else. No-one should decide for women. It is our democratic right to choose. When one woman becomes a feminist she should not be seen as waging a war against men, but be seen as a woman fighting for liberation. I don't want a parliament with men only. People should choose because the person has potential. We want proper representation. We want women's issues discussed equally to other issues. For example, maternity rights should not be a secondary issue. A Constituent Assembly should be drawn up by women as well, so that women's ideas are also carried out. Women must also decide for our country. We are the backbone of the nation."

Sizakele's message for women of South Africa is: "We as women must not just say we expect women to be in the future parliament and not do anything about it. We must be shoulder to shoulder with our menfolk in the fight. Women, together with men, will do better."

### **BUILD UNITY!**

"We don't sleep at night anymore. We wake up to hear gun shots. Sometimes they are near, and sometimes they are far. But after we have heard them, we cannot sleep. And they happen every night. We cannot leave our homes. Where can you go at midnight? We live in fear. People are being killed daily."

These are the words of a Soweto woman. She is one of the thousands of people who live in fear. The Natal war has moved into the Reef townships. More than 5 000 people have been brutally killed in the Natal war, and already more than 800 people have been killed on the Reef.

The journey to and from work is not safe. On 13 September, 26 people were slaughtered like cattle on a Johannesburg train. Many people were injured. Blood, pain, fear, death was everywhere on the train and in the station. On 9 October 1990, men opened fire on a bus going to Inanda, outside Durban. Everybody on the bus was injured, and six people were killed.

Violence, hate and revenge is the poison that is pouring out of the apartheid sore. Years and years of the migrant labour system, people forced off the land, racism, poverty-stricken townships, bantu education and brutal government is spilling out. Violence breeds violence. Unless we stop the war, our children will learn only violence.

This war is about power. There are those who want to sew disunity, so that in all the mess and chaos, they are the winners. They want to rule by the gun and by the panga and the mellow yellow. We have seen the same clever war happen in Mozambique and Angola, in an attempt to stop a majority government from ruling in peace. This is not a Zulu-Xhosa war. This is not a black-on-black war, or a black-on-white war. This war is being waged by those who do not want South Africa to be free. They have the most to lose in a new South Africa where we don't rule through the barrel of a gun.

We have to do everything in our power to understand this war for what it is. We have to build understanding and democracy in our organisations. This is our most powerful weapon. We are on the brink of real change happening in South Africa. The task of building unity and discipline in the face of brutal opposition is not easy. But we have to do it to make sure that we win our free South Africa that is truly non-racist, non-sexist, and democratic - SPEAK Collective.

# Screams of Silence

"A wife married is like a pony bought - I'll ride her and whip her as I like."

This is an old Chinese saying. It talks of the violence that men use against their wives and girlfriends. The idea that men can treat the women they live with as they like is not only found in China. All over the world, among the rich and the poor, women are treated as things that belong to men. As things that men can treat as they want to, and beat as they want to.

Violence against women is everywhere. But it is one of the things that people do not talk about. This violence stays hidden behind a wall of silence.

## **Behind the wall of silence**

Every day thousands of women are beaten and sexually harrassed in their own homes by the men they live with. Women and young girls all over the world are victims of this violence. This violence is not seen as bad, because to treat women and girls badly has become part of custom or tradition.

For example, in Nepal, near India, girl babies die because parents don't give them proper care. Sons are valued more and are given better care. In Sudan, in North Africa, the private parts of girls are cut to make sure they stay virgins until they marry. And in India, young brides are killed by their husbands when the bride's parents do not give a big enough dowry. Dowry is what the bride's family gives her, like clothing, household things and money to take with her to her new home.

Women are treated like this just because they are women. Not because they have done anything wrong. But nobody protests against it,

and sometimes it is even made legal by laws and customs made by men.

## **Women's rights are human rights**

Violence against women should be taken up by all freedom-loving organisations and people. Many women die because of this violence and many other young girls and women suffer great pain.

The United Nations (UN) has taken up many struggles for human rights, but it has done very little about the violence against women.

Violence against women goes against the UN Declaration of Human Rights, but it has not been taken up as a human rights issue.

If a person is killed because of his or her politics, the world, as it should, shouts out about this. But if a woman is beaten or allowed to be killed because of being female, the world is silent because it says this is culture or tradition. For as long as we all keep silent we are agreeing that women's lives are worth nothing.

## **A bloody story**

Violence against women happens all over the world, in rich countries, in white homes, in black homes. It happens just as much in Africa, Asia, and South America as it happens in the United States of America and Europe.

Worldwatch Institute is an organisation that collected figures on the violence against women in different countries. These numbers tell a terrible story.

\* In Peru, in South America, 70% of all crimes reported to the police are of women beaten by their partners.

- \* In the United States of America, a woman is raped every six minutes.
- \* A study in Bangkok, in Thailand, found that half the married women were beaten often by their husbands.
- \* In 1985, 54% of all murders in Austria were committed in the family, with women and children being 90% of those murdered.
- \* In Quito, Equador, in South America, more than 80% of the women interviewed had been beaten by their partners.
- \* Between 1986 and 1987, 18 000 cases of women beaten by their partners were reported to the police in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in South America.

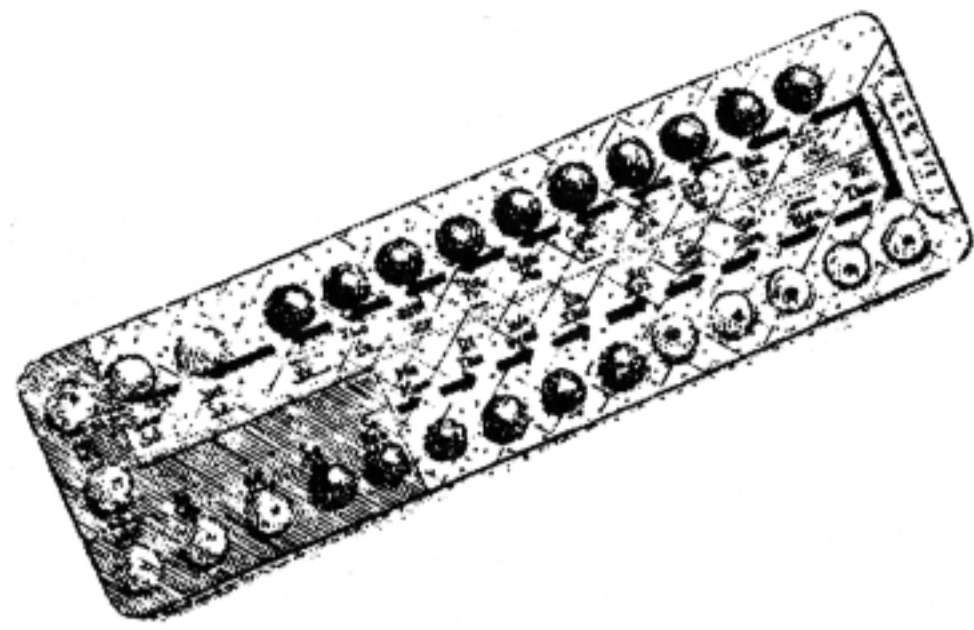
Women's organisations have named 25 November 1990 International Day for an End to Violence Against Women. This day is to make all people aware of the crimes against women. It is a day when women come together to fight the violence against them. A day when they can make demands, like the demand made by women in Brazil, Peru, Uruguay and Chile, for police stations for women. It is a day when everybody who believes in human rights can say: "This violence against women must stop!"

This story was taken from an article called 'Crimes and Gender' by Lari Heise in Isis International Latin America and Carriibbean Women's Health Network.



# Preventing pregnancy

## - the Pill



*Not all men and women who have sex want to have babies. The only way to prevent having a baby is by using contraception. Many people call contraception 'prevention'. There are many different kinds of prevention - like condoms, the diaphragm, the loop, the rhythm method, and the Pill. They all work in different ways to prevent pregnancy. In this issue of SPEAK we talk about the Pill. This article is not just for women. It is for men as well. Prevention is not a 'women's department'. Sex is shared by two people. And so the responsibility for prevention must also be shared. In other SPEAK articles we will explain the other kinds of prevention.*

### **Prevention Pills**

There are two different kinds of Pills that women can take to prevent pregnancy: the Pill and the mini-pill. If these pills are taken properly then they are very good at preventing pregnancy.

### **The Pill**

The Pill has two chemicals in it, called oestrogen and progesterone. To understand how the Pill works, you need to understand a woman's menstrual cycle.

### **The menstrual cycle**

Each woman has two ovaries. In each ovary there are thousands of eggs. About 14 days after the woman starts her last period an egg leaves one of the ovaries. This is called ovulation. If a woman has sex with a man at this time of the month, she is likely to get pregnant. Sperm from the man's penis moves up through the woman's vagina up to the neck of the womb, which is called the cervix. Special fluids in the cervix help the sperm move into the womb and tubes. The sperm meets the egg and they join together. This is called fertilisation.

This is the beginning of a pregnancy. If the woman's egg is not fertilised, then she will get her next period as usual.

### **How does the Pill work?**

The Pill stops the brain from releasing the hormones that make a woman release an egg every month. The hormones released by the Pill also make it difficult for a fertilised egg to stay in the womb lining, and it makes the fluids in the cervix unfriendly to sperm.

### **How do you take the Pill?**

A woman takes one Pill every day. It is best to take the Pill at the same time each day. Each pack of Pills has 28 pills in it. Some packets show you exactly where to start. Other Pill packets have the name of the day marked showing you where to start. You start your packet of Pills either on the first day or the fifth day of your period. The nurse or doctor will tell you which day is best for you, and whether you need to take extra prevention for the first two weeks after starting the Pill. You are only safe from pregnancy when you take a Pill every day.

### **Where can you get the Pill?**

You can go to a doctor or to a Family Planning Clinic to get the Pill.

### **What are the problems with the Pill?**

Most women do not have any problems, called side-effects, from the Pill. But some women do have problems from taking the Pill. There are different kinds of Pills, and sometimes these problems can be sorted out by changing to another Pill.

\* Some women feel a bit sick from taking the Pill. This feeling may just last a few months. If you take the Pill at night it can help.



\* Some women find they put on weight when they go on the Pill.

\* Some women find the Pill makes them depressed and short-tempered. But often this doesn't last very long.

\* Some women bleed in the middle of the month. This is called breakthrough bleeding. This sometimes happens when you first start to take the Pill. You should stay on the Pill for at least three months to see if this problem goes away. If it carries on, talk to a doctor or nurse. They may say that you should try another Pill.

\* Some women find they don't feel like having sex while they are on the Pill.

\* Some women find they get headaches. If you get a few headaches for a short while then there is no need to worry. But if you start to get migraine headaches, which are headaches that

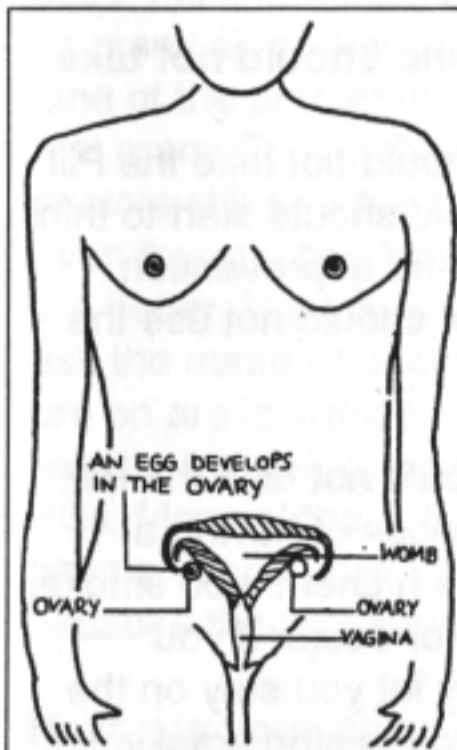
are so bad that you vomit and cannot see clearly, you must stop taking the Pill.

\* Some women's blood pressure (BP) goes up when they are on the Pill. This can be serious and you would have to stop taking the Pill.

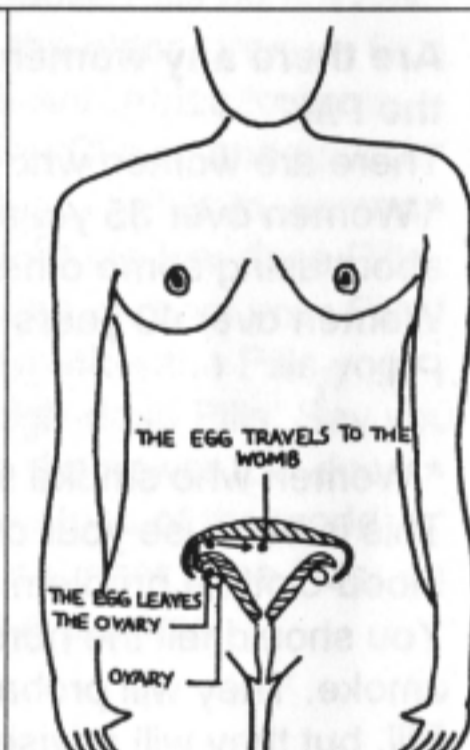
\* The Pill makes your blood thicker and more likely to form blood-clots. Blood-clots are like little lumps of blood. These blood-clots most often form in the legs, and cause a painful, swollen leg. The blood-clots can break off into your blood stream and block the blood from getting to the lungs. This can be very serious so you must always go straight to your doctor if you have this kind of leg swelling. It only happens to a very few women, but a woman may get a blood-clot which blocks the blood supply to the brain. This is called a stroke.

### What happens to periods on the Pill?

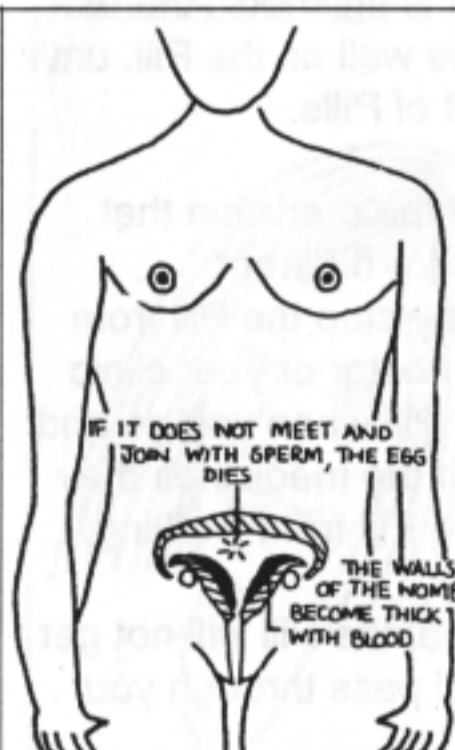
Your periods may be the same as before. But



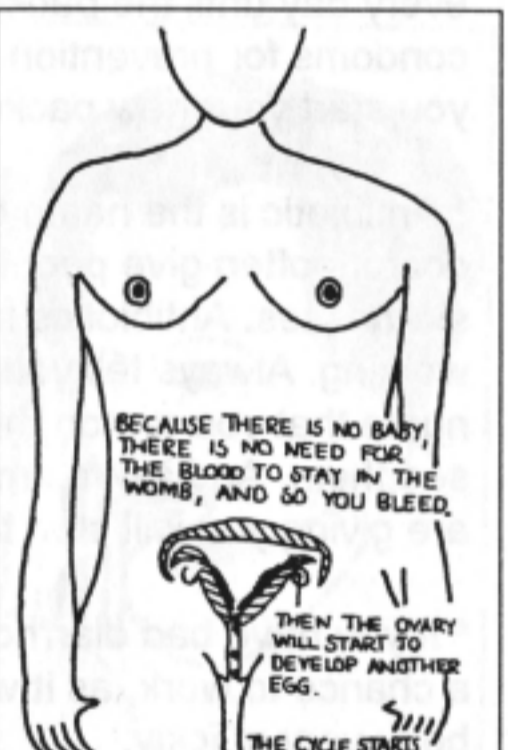
The menstrual cycle starts with an egg being made in your ovaries. About fourteen days after your period has started, your egg is fully developed. It leaves the ovary. This is called ovulation. If you have sex with a man around this time of ovulation, the man's sperm will probably join with your egg, and you become pregnant. This is called fertilisation. Then your periods stop for 9 months.



Some women get a pain in their side when they ovulate. This means they can feel the egg leaving the ovary. The egg moves slowly down to the womb. The egg takes three days to get to the womb. If you do not have sex during this time, then your menstrual cycle continues, and you will bleed again in about two weeks time.



The wall of your womb starts to become thick with a lining of blood. The womb does this so that if you do become pregnant, the baby grows here. If you do not become pregnant, then there is no need for the blood to stay in your womb. So, the blood comes away from the walls of the womb. This is when you get your period. Then the menstrual cycle begins all over again.



If you take the Pill, then the Pill stops the brain from releasing the hormones that make you release an egg every month. The hormones in the Pill also make it difficult for a fertilised egg to stay in the womb lining. And it makes the fluids in the cervix unfriendly to the sperm.

many women find that they get less blood when they menstruate, and sometimes they may stop bleeding altogether. This is nothing to worry about. Some women even find that having lighter periods is better. Many women find that they no longer get bad period pains. A woman's periods are very regular when she is on the Pill.

#### **How well does the Pill work?**

If you take your pill every day, you cannot get pregnant. It is the safest method of contraception that you can use.

#### **When does the Pill NOT work?**

There are times when the Pill does not work:

- \* If you forget to take a Pill for a day or more, you may get pregnant. If you do forget to take a Pill you must take it as soon as you remember, and take the Pill for the day that you forgot as well. The Pill will not prevent pregnancy for the rest of the packet. But carry on taking your Pill every day until the packet is finished. And use condoms for prevention as well as the Pill, until you start your new packet of Pills.

- \* Antibiotic is the name of the medicine that doctors often give people for different sicknesses. Antibiotics may stop the Pill from working. Always tell your doctor or your clinic nurse that you are on the Pill when you go and see them. And ask them if the medicines they are giving you will stop the Pill from working.

- \* If you have bad diarrhoea, the Pill will not get a chance to work, as it will pass through your body very quickly.

- \* If you change from one Pill to another Pill, then you must use other prevention for the first two weeks of being on the new Pill. But only change Pills when the nurse or doctor advises you to.

#### **Getting pregnant after you stop the Pill?**

Most women find that their periods go back to the same as before soon after they stop taking the Pill. But for some women it may take up to six months for periods to start again. For these women, medicines can be used to start periods and the monthly release of eggs again. The Pill will not make you infertile.



Health is your right! So don't be shy to ask questions at the doctor or clinic.

#### **Are there any women who should not take the Pill?**

There are women who should not take the Pill.

- \* Women over 35 years old should start to think about using some other kind of prevention. Women over 40 years old should not use the Pill.

- \* Women who smoke should not take the Pill. This is because your chances of having a blood-clotting problem are higher if you smoke. You should tell the nurse or doctor if you smoke. They will probably let you stay on the Pill, but they will advise you to stop smoking. This is a good time to give up the unhealthy habit anyway!

- \* Women who suffer with migraine headaches should not take the Pill.

- \* Women who get high blood pressure or blood-clotting should not take the Pill.

- \* Women who have cancer of the breast or cancer of the cervix must not take the Pill.

#### **Do women need to take a break from the Pill?**

Many years ago when the Pill was first given to

women, doctors used to tell women to stop the Pill for a few months after they had been on the Pill for three years. This is no longer necessary. As long as the Pill suits you, it is safe to stay on it for a long time.

### **What are the main advantages of being on the Pill?**

The best thing about the Pill is that it makes you very safe from falling pregnant. It is easy to take and most women do not suffer from any problems with it. It also means that you can have sex whenever you want without worrying. Some women like the Pill because they can hide the packet from their boyfriends or husband, and so use prevention without them knowing.

### **Some Pills are better than others**

Some Pills have more hormones in them than others - these are called 'high-dose' Pills. The Pills with less hormones in them are called 'low-dose' Pills. The new low-dose Pills do not have as many side-effects as the older stronger Pills. One of the problems in South Africa today is that many Family Planning Clinics and private doctors still give the high-dose Pills to women, even though they know that the low-dose Pills are better. Next time you go and get your Pills, ask the nurse or doctor whether the Pills you are on are low-dose or high-dose Pills. Say you want to be changed onto the newer low-dose Pills. Many of the rich countries of the world have stopped giving the stronger dose Pills, because the side-effects are worse.

### **Health is your right!**

You have a right to know everything about the Pill if you are going to take it. Ask questions. Make sure you get the care that you should.

Here are some things you should check when you go to the doctor or the clinic if you decide to take the Pill:

\* Did they check your blood pressure? Did they ask you if you get high blood pressure? They must do this every time you go for more Pills.

\* Did they ask you if you have ever had blood-clotting?

\* Did they ask you if you are breast-feeding?

\* Did they ask you if you have had cancer of the womb or breast?

\* If you are already on the Pill, did they ask you if you have had any problems with it?

\* Did they explain exactly how to take the Pill?

\* Did they ask you if you get migraine headaches?

\* Did they ask you if you smoke?

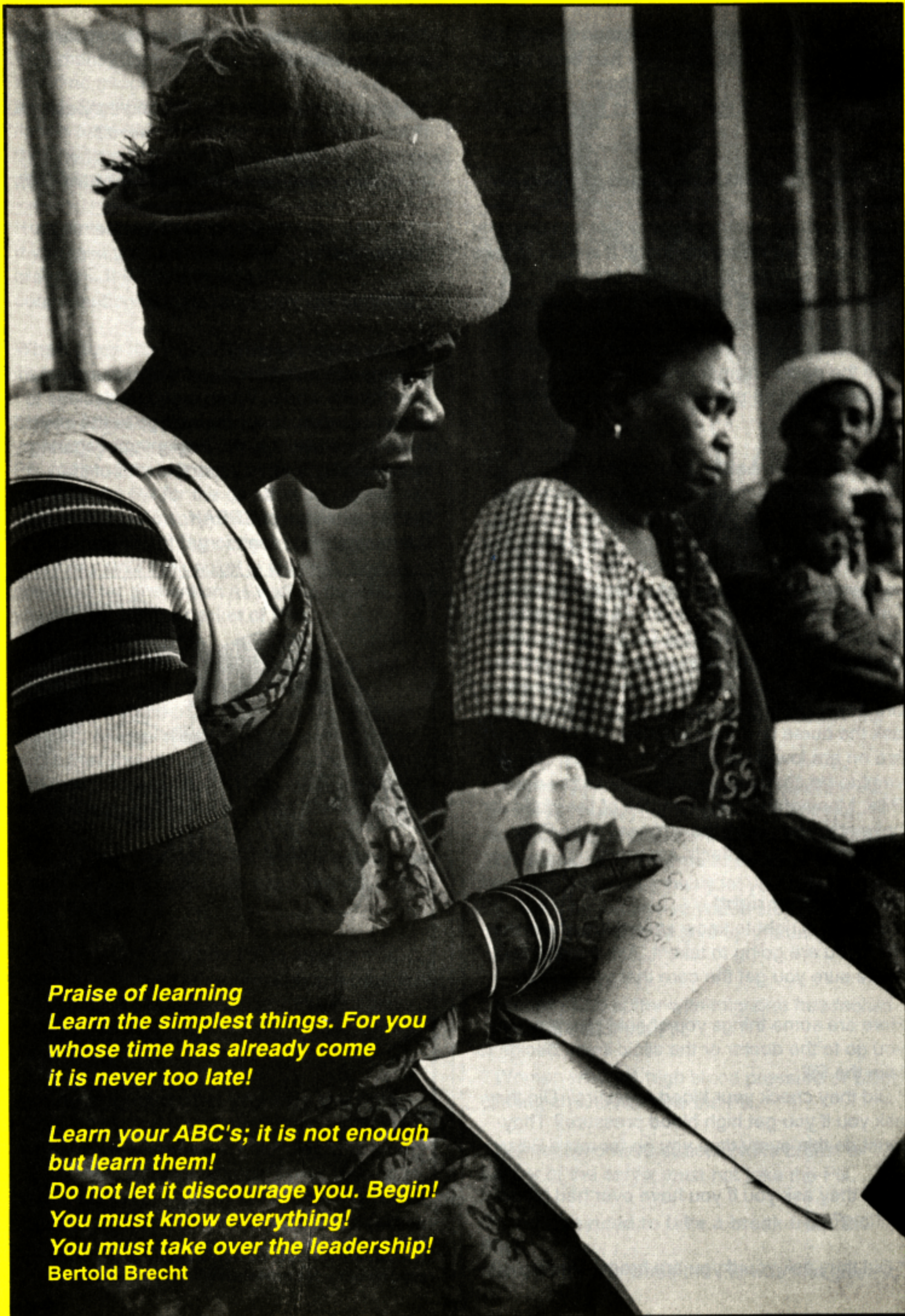
### **Taking responsibility**

It is important that men and women understand how the Pill works. When a couple decides to use prevention, they can both go to the clinic or doctor together. It is the beginning of sharing responsibility for this important part of life.

In the next issue of SPEAK, we will talk about the mini-pill. So, don't forget to get your copy!



**'Prevention' is not a women's department. Share the responsibility for prevention with your partner.**



***Praise of learning  
Learn the simplest things. For you  
whose time has already come  
it is never too late!***

***Learn your ABC's; it is not enough  
but learn them!  
Do not let it discourage you. Begin!  
You must know everything!  
You must take over the leadership!  
Bertold Brecht***