

Teeva Rajgopal

ORGANIZING WOMEN NOW



YOU MUST GO FORWARD!

**“You who have no work,
speak.
You who have no homes,
speak.
You who have no schools,
speak.
You who have to run like
chicken from the vulture,
speak.
Let us share our problems
so that we can solve them
together.
We must free ourselves.
Men and women must share
housework.
Men and women must work
together in the home and out
in the world.
There are no creches and
nursery schools for our
children.
There are no homes for the
aged.
There is no-one to care for
the sick.
Women must unite to fight
for these rights.”**

A poem by Dora Tamana -
South African women's leader.



Throughout her life, Poomanie believed in, and actively promoted the organisation of women and their equal involvement in the struggle for freedom and our own liberation.

POOMANIE MOODLEY

BORN: 28.6.1926

DIED: 11.8.1982

- ★ 1950's: She was involved in the Defiance Campaign, the campaign against the Bantu Education Act, and the Congress of the People.
- ★ 1960's: She was a nurse at King George V Hospital, where she organised a nurses' union to struggle for better wages and working conditions.
- ★ Up until her death in 1982, Poomanie was active in the Durban Women's Group, the forerunner to NOW.

PEGGY DHLAMINI

BORN: 29.1.53

DIED: 1982

1980: local secretary: SAAWU

1981: local secretary: FCWU

1982: Secretary of Natal
Ad Hoc Trade Union
Solidarity Committee

Secretary: Solomzi (Clermont
Residents' Association)

Actively involved in the
Durban Women's Group
(from which NOW arose)



“Traditionally, the woman's place is in the home - in the kitchen to be precise. This has inhibited women in all spheres of life. Men do not have confidence in their womenfolk- so much so that they do not see the role women can play...”

WHY THIS BOOKLET?

In October last year, NOW held a workshop to which many women from different areas came. Together, we looked at **WHY WE NEED TO BE ORGANISED AS WOMEN.** This booklet contains many of the ideas which came out of the workshop, and tells you about the Natal Organisation of Women.

NOW is:

an organisation of women, formed in Natal in 1983.

NOW aims:

1. to struggle against all racial, economic and sexual exploitation.
2. to unite women to solve problems that affect us in the community and at our places of work.
3. to strengthen women so that we are more confident of our decisions and our actions, and so that we can play a greater part in other organisations to which we belong (eg. civics, youth organisation, trade unions).

“Women make up half of society. If women are not liberated, then society is not free.”

**THUS UNITED AND ORGANISED WE CAN WORK FOR
A FREE AND DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA
WHERE DISCRIMINATION BASED ON**

SEX



RACE



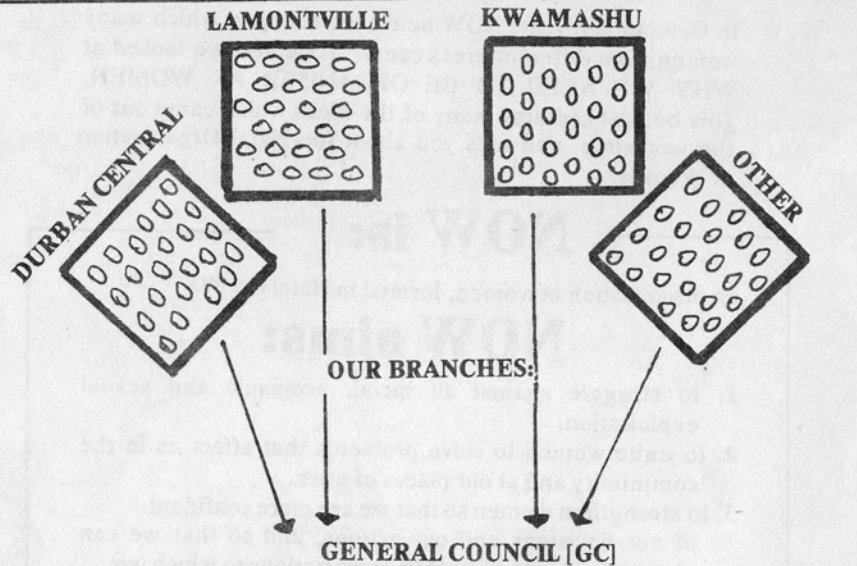
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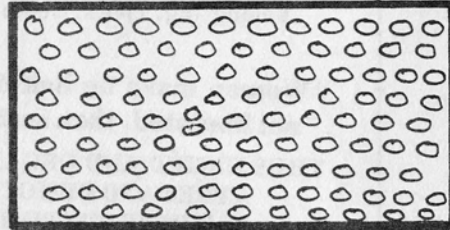
WILL NOT EXIST.

LET EACH OF US ORGANISE!

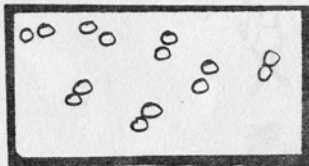
HOW NOW WORKS



- ★ consists of all members of NOW
- ★ meets every 2 months
- ★ discusses and shares problems, experiences and ideas
- ★ decides on a programme of action for NOW.



EXECUTIVE: 2 REPS FROM EACH BRANCH



- ★ co-ordinates NOW activities and branches so the organisation runs smoothly
- ★ plans the agenda for general council
- ★ liaises with other organisations.



WE SHALL DEMAND:

- ★ Adequate housing at reasonable rents
- ★ Public transport at affordable prices
- ★ The right of all to decide where to live
- ★ Adequate & equal pensions & disability grants
- ★ Proper creches and nursery schools
- ★ Adequate health facilities
- ★ The right of all women to decide whether or not to practise birth control, and to choose what birth control method to use
- ★ Equal rights & status in marriage & all laws
- ★ Free & compulsory education for all
- ★ Equal employment opportunities & a just & living wage
- ★ Full trade union rights for all workers
- ★ Paid maternity leave for all working women
- ★ An end to child labour & an end to the harsh & inhumane working conditions of domestic & farm workers
- ★ An end to the homeland system which denies people political rights in the land of their birth & divides us along ethnic lines
- ★ The removal of the Group Areas Act, pass laws & the migrant labour system
- ★ The rejection of the new parliament & all government-created bodies which do not represent the majority of people
- ★ The removal of all security laws & the release of all political prisoners & detainees
- ★ The right of all to free association and participation in democratic organisations.



WHY DO WE AS WOMEN NEED TO BE ORGANISED?



★ lower wages even though we may be supporting our families alone.

(Women earn only about half or a third of the average man's wage.)

★ lack of maternity rights. Women who fall pregnant, often lose their jobs.

★ threat of unemployment. (Bosses refuse to see women as breadwinners, instead they spread the lie that women work only for 'extras' to explain the low wages!)

★ sexual harassment - women are often forced to promise sexual favours in order to get or keep their jobs.

AFTER WORK, WOMEN WORKERS COME HOME TO ANOTHER SHIFT - CLEANING AND COOKING, AND LOOKING AFTER CHILDREN - UNLIKE MEN WHO COME HOME TO REST.



DISCUSSION

1. Do you think it is necessary for women to unite? Why?
2. What problems do you experience as a woman?
3. Ask women at your workplace or near your home what problems they experience.
4. What practical suggestions do you have for tackling these problems?

★ the burden of having to carry passes.

★ lack of childcare facilities

★ unsafe contraception, eg. Depo Provera is so dangerous, it is banned in America where it is made, but is freely given to us in clinics and at work.

★ cost of living - most women have to see that children are fed, while food prices are constantly rising.

★ under South African law, African women in Natal are minors and are under the control of male relatives or chiefs.

WHERE TO NOW? [1985]

This booklet has looked at our organisation, and at why women need to be organised. These are some of the activities we would like to take up in 1985:

1. NOW newsletter reporting on the things women in our branch and elsewhere are doing.
2. Workshops on various themes, for example:
 - how to make posters, pamphlets and so on
 - trade unions
 - childcare
 - maintenance for children of single and divorced mothers
3. Projects:
 - literacy
 - bulk buying co-operatives
 - fruit and vegetable growing schemes
 - health, for example making people aware of the dangers of the contraceptive injection, Depo Provera
4. Commemorations:
 - August 9 - National Women's Day
 - March 8 - International Women's Day.
5. NOW Branches: run activities to attract more women.



WHAT WE HAVE DONE:

- ★ Looked at the effects of the new Black Taxation Act which has led to further hardships, especially for black married women.
- ★ Organised a welcome for one of our heroines, Ma Dorothy Nyembe, who had spent 15 years in prison.
- ★ Commemorated National Women's Day (August 9).
- ★ Worked jointly with the United Democratic Front (UDF) on its campaigns, eg. Million Signatures.

SOME BRANCH PROGRAMMES

★ LAMONTVILLE:

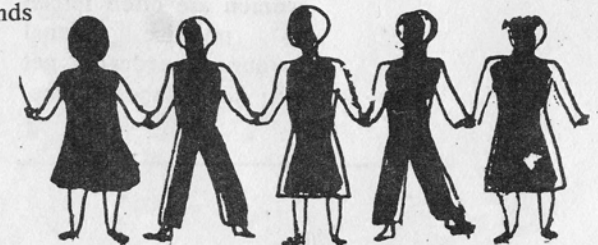
- vegetable bulk-buying project
- looking into childcare in the area
- worked with local community organisations on such issues as high rents, matric exams
- raising funds to help evicted families
- staged a play on removals for Women's Day 1984

★ KWA MASHU:

- worked with the local TB clinic in helping patients to take their drugs.
- formed a choir to spread the message of our struggle
- organised a local welcome for Ma Dorothy Nyembe
- fruit and vegetable growing schemes
- raised funds to help each other during problem times, eg. funerals. Hand crafts were made and sold.

★ DURBAN CENTRAL & DISTRICT:

- organised a holiday programme for children in Overport
- held jumble sales to raise funds



FIGHTING WOMEN



LILIAN NGOYI

BORN: 1911

DIED: 1980

PRESIDENT:

ANC Women's League
Federation of SA Women

1956: led a march of 20 000
women to Pretoria to
protest the extension
of pass laws to
women.

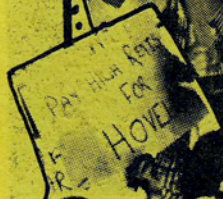
**“FREEDOM DOES NOT COME WALKING TOWARDS
YOU - IT MUST BE WON!”**

At the inaugural conference of FSAW in 1954, she criticised those men in the Congress Alliance, who upheld the status quo by keeping women tied to the home:

“the husbands talked of democracy, but did not practice it.”



LET EACH OF US ORGANISE
SPEAK WITH OTHER WOMEN
UNITE WITH OTHER WOMEN FOR A NEW
SOCIETY FREE OF OPPRESSION AND
EXPLOITATION!



TO JOIN, CONTACT:
THEMBI DLAMINI: 312600
HERSHEELA NARSEE: 68681

