

# SPEAK

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PUTTING WOMEN FIRST

No.67

DECEMBER 1994/JANUARY 1995

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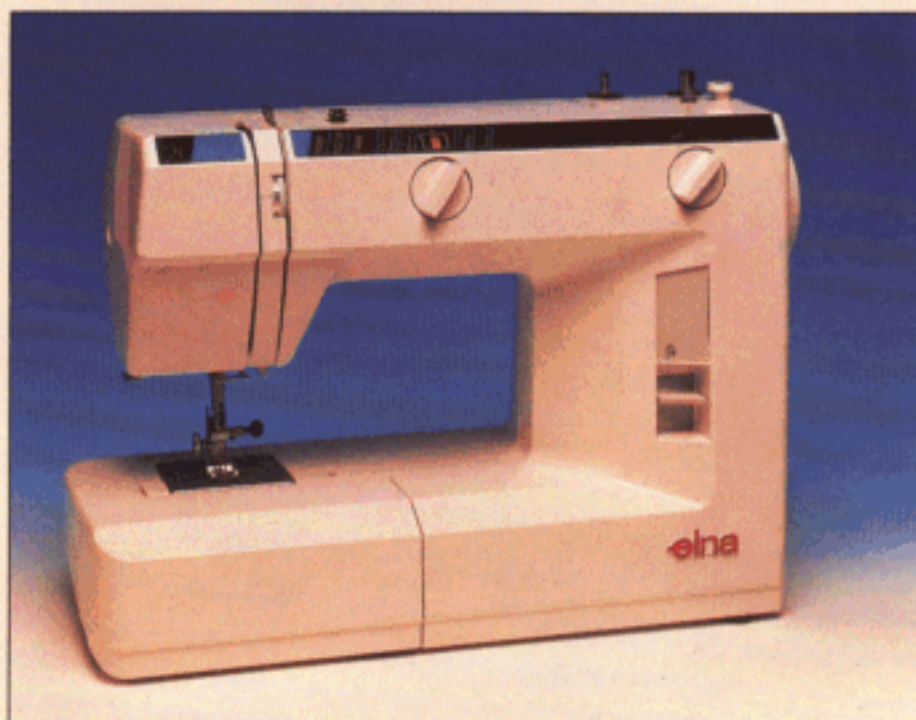
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Answer the questions which appear on this page in the December/January, February and March issues of **SPEAK** and the machine could be yours.

The March issue will have a form on which you can write all the answers for the three issues, and then send it off. The closing date for the competition is 30 March 1995.

You will find the answers for December/January in the *Starting out* article on page 26, which is about setting up a business.



Fill in the missing words:

When thinking about starting a business, think of something people ..... and will ..... for.

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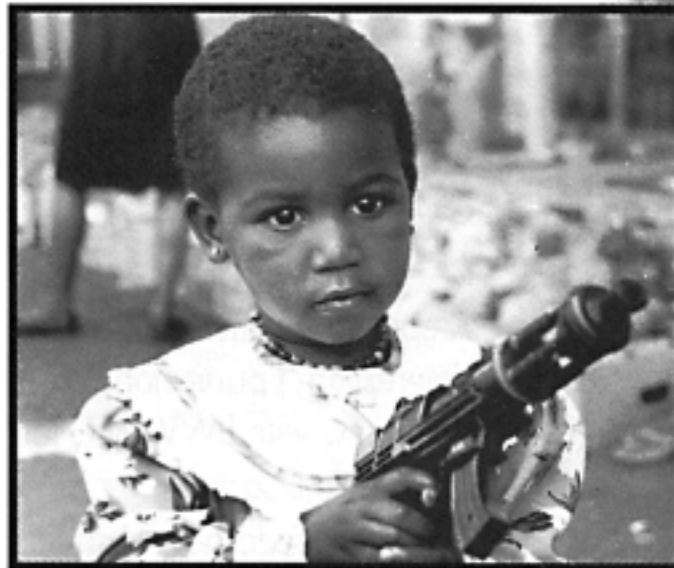
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COVER PHOTO: Julian Drew

## COMMENT

The sun is soon to set on 1994. What a year it's been! Elections, a new government, the gravy train. A new interim constitution and the Bill of Rights. For election promises to bear fruit, sound planning, time and resources are needed. Since it is mostly men in power we should not take for granted that they either know, or are interested in, women's needs. We have to tell them. For this, we need strong women, strong organisations and strong voices.

1994 sees the end of one strong voice — that of Learn & Teach magazine. Since 1981, Learn & Teach has been the only basic adult educational magazine written for the newly-literate. Funding for it has dried up, and businesses would not invest in it. This as a crying shame, and we despair at the way independent media, like Learn & Teach, Africa South and East, Work in Progress and Vrye Weekblad, have been forced to close down.

We turn our eyes towards the dawn of 1995. Our series on the Bill of Rights shows that women can now challenge the laws to get rid of discrimination. Another article raises the question of how to organise as women. Can we make 1995 a year in which women mobilise in their thousands to claim their rights?

We wish all our readers a peaceful and relaxing time over the holidays. By the way, holidays are times to take a rest and they belong to women as well as men. Sisters, make sure you get one.

All the best from us at SPEAK to you, our readers.

# Talk Back

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

## Castrate rapists

Your September issue of SPEAK was very interesting. I particularly enjoyed your interview with PWV MEC for Security, Jessie Duarte.

I consider rape to be a horrible offence and my view is that rapists should be castrated.

I swear, if a man raped me or even attempted to, I would castrate him instantly or make sure he dies. I also agree with your article on the need to change some English words which discriminate against women. That's one of the reasons I hate anything English. I shall always stick to my political beliefs — that English belongs to England.

*Nonhlanhla Mate  
Rusloo*

## I am very grateful

I am writing to thank you for helping me find after-school care for my daughter early this year. My gratitude may be late, but I cannot thank you enough.

My daughter is enjoying herself at Eclah pre-school. She has made a lot of friends. I wish to tell all SPEAK readers that I am proud of your magazine. I will always approach you when need arises.

SPEAK is not only a magazine but

a treasured friend to all women. Phambili Makhosikazi. May we keep standing together!

*Mahadi Miya  
Vosloorus*

## No SPEAK in homelands

Many thanks for the T-shirt you sent me. I really appreciate it. Unfortunately, I don't get SPEAK anymore because I am living in the village (homelands).

I wish you could send me SPEAK magazine every month. Please give me full details. I like the magazine very much.

*Monica Nolusapho Mgxekwa  
Palmienfontein*

**Have you considered subscribing to SPEAK? This will make sure you get the magazine regularly. If there are other readers experiencing the same problem, please write to us. — Editor**

## Hamba kahle Comrade Adam

I felt very sad when I learnt of the death of Comrade Feroza Adam. Like most of our political heroes (Oliver Tambo, Chris Hani, Hector

Peterson), she will not be around to enjoy the fruits of the freedom she fought so hard for.

To all our fallen heroes' families I say: we are thinking of you all the time. May our love and warmth comfort you always. Could you please give me Comrades Winnie Mandela and Pallo Jordan's addresses?

*Kingsley Majani Moletso  
Potchefstroom*

**Here are the addresses you requested:**

**Dr Pallo Jordan  
Minister for Posts,  
Telecommunications and  
Broadcasting  
Private Bag X882  
Pretoria, 0001**

**Mrs Winnie Mandela  
Deputy Minister for Arts,  
Culture, Science and  
Technology  
Private Bag X  
Pretoria, 0001**



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winner of our  
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competition is  
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Penelope  
Mgaga of  
Hammarisdale.  
Well done!**



**November 25**  
*International day to*  
**END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**



The back cover of the November issue was drawn by Sanna Naidoo.

*More and more people are reading*

# Challenge

Church & People

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# Kwa-Sophie

## Judging on merit?

The number of women judges in South Africa doubled with the appointment of two to the new Constitutional Court.

Professor Yvonne Mokgoro, a long time activist in Bophuthatswana, was shocked by some of the questions women candidates were asked by the Judicial Service Commission members during public interviews to select judges for the Constitutional Court.

She said she couldn't believe her ears when commissioners asked women how they would deal with their childcare responsibilities should they be appointed to the court.

Professor Mokgoro says one of the first things she will do in her new job is to change attitudes of both the commissioners and fellow judges who still believe that childcare is a women's affair.

She is right. In this day and age, our "learned" colleagues should be thinking more about co-parenting.



## Men and balls

The other day I took my three-year-old niece to the park. While I settled down on a bench to relax, she played soccer with a group of boys. A few minutes later, two men joined the children. Suddenly, one of them picked the ball and said: "Why are you boys playing soccer with this girl?" He turned around and told my niece to go home and play with her dolls. I walked over to him, grabbed the ball and told him to leave the children alone.

Why can't adults mind their own business and let girls play whatever games they like. Who says soccer is a men's game anyway?

## Sexism — a matter of percentages?

If you believe men will never change their sexist attitudes, you may be right. Here's a story told to me by a friend.

"One day I was sitting at the Wimpy having lunch when a young man came to sit next to me. He was pleasant and I decided it wouldn't kill me to talk to him. We started talking about democracy in this 'rainbow nation'. Somehow the conversation changed. We ended up talking gender.

"I asked him if he thought women were inferior.

He said: "I used to think women were 100 percent inferior to men. But now, I think they are just about 50 percent."

Well, I guess we still have a long way to go in educating men that we are equal. It's going to be a lot of hard work.

I'm feeling tired already.

## Quote of the Month

"I want to educate women about issues central to their lives so they question attitudes that they may otherwise take for granted."

— Rosemary Konkola, one of the few female radio producers in Zambia.

## Competition

### Win a radio/cassette player

You can be the lucky winner of a radio/cassette player if you tell us who you would like to see on the front cover of SPEAK and why. Fill in your choice below. Make sure your entry reaches us by January 15, 1994.

I would like to see

.....  
on the front cover of SPEAK.

Name. ....

Address.....  
.....  
.....

.....Code. ....

**Send your entry to:**

SPEAK RADIO/CASSETTE PLAYER COMPETITION

PO Box 556

Johannesburg 2000

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

# End of the road for Learn & Teach



## The first Learn and Teach . . .

**A** loving mother walks into a hospital ward where her son is lying in pain. When she raises her tear-filled eyes, she sees a doctor standing at his bedside. She hopes to hear comforting news.

"How is my son, doctor?" she asks. "Will he be okay?"

The doctor looks down. "I'm so sorry," she says sadly. "Your son is dying. We can't cure the disease." The mother looks at the thin body lying on the bed. Without saying a word, she walks out.

This is not a true story. But can you guess how this mother would feel in real life?

If you can, that's how I felt during the first week of October. Anger. Frustration. Bitterness. Betrayal. Cowardice... Yes, I smelt death in the air — the death of Learn & Teach, an adult basic educational magazine, of which I was editor. It was founded in 1981 by Learn & Teach

## The editor of Learn & Teach, Saul Molobi, writes about the closure of South Africa's only adult basic educational magazine

Publications because of the lack of English reading materials for newly-literate people. I've worked for this magazine since 1988.

Since the beginning of this year, I knew the financial position of Learn & Teach was so bad it was like a sinking ship. But unlike last year's Oceanos' crew, Learn & Teach had a better one — a crew committed and dedicated to saving it.

We were motivated by our beliefs and what Learn & Teach stood for. Our mission was to:

- ◆ Improve the level of English of the reader by providing articles simply and creatively written.
- ◆ Promote a culture of reading by publishing exciting and interesting stories.
- ◆ Build skills and knowledge through a wide range of articles.

The excellent quality of our stories was recognised by the South African Consumer

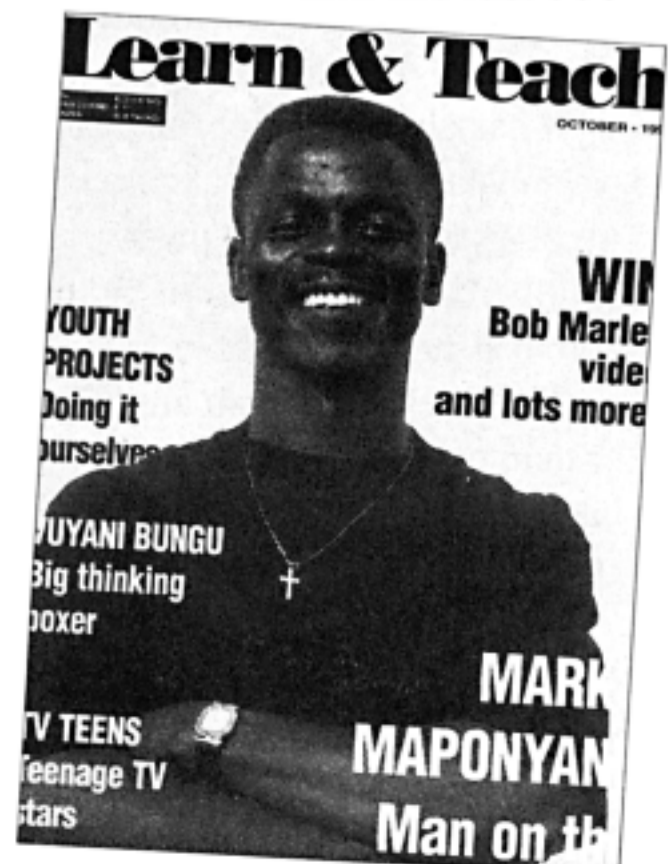
Council earlier this year when they gave us an award. They praised the magazine for: "its efforts in making consumers aware of their rights, for its discussion of consumer problems and topics such as health, money matters and housing, and for being a valuable source of information to consumers who are not fluent in English."

Learn & Teach had over 200 000 readers. Market researchers told us most readers "valued Learn & Teach as a reference source and usually kept it forever."

Learn & Teach's crew wanted to save the magazine. The last few months saw us meeting various individuals, funding partners, sister organisations, private companies - anyone we thought could help. Every one of them liked the magazine. Sadly, nobody was prepared to invest in it. We finally decided to ask a fundraising expert for advice. He told us we had no hope of raising money for Learn & Teach. He said: "Funding for the independent media in this country has been phased out, so there's no way you can raise money for this magazine."

We are still looking at ways of keeping the Learn & Teach dream alive. But it will not be coming out in the same way again. ☆

## and the last . . .





Photos: Julian Drew

Maria Mutola started her career in a boys football team. Now she's a gold medal athlete. *Julian Drew* tells her story

# Queen of the track

**S**aturday morning in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique. In the poor township of Chamanculo, a smartly dressed woman looks over a familiar place with fond memories.

It has changed over the past seven years. The sunbaked red sand, swirling in the wind, is still there, but the building at the corner is now just rubble.

The piles of rubbish are larger than ever. But one thing hasn't changed: boys and girls still play football.

For these young children, the promises made in last October's

elections had little meaning. But they see hope in this woman, now happily joining in the game. She weaves through them with the ball seemingly glued to her foot, showing skills which made her a celebrity seven years ago. Now she is a legend.

This is no latter-day Eusebio, one of the world's greatest soccer players in the 1960s. This is a young woman and she is Africa's only current female world athletics champion. The world knows her as Maria Mutola, the 22-year-old queen of the track who has dominated 800m running for the past two

years. To the young footballers she is Lurdes Mutola, the kid from their neighbourhood who made it good.

Mutola became the country's best woman soccer player at 13. She played for a men's second division club called Aguia d'Ouro (Golden Eagle). When her goal kept a rival team out of the semi-finals, a storm of protest started because she was a woman. She was banned from the men's league by the Mozambican Football Federation.

Mutola continued to play in neighbourhood competitions between street teams. And there she was spotted by Jose Craveirinha, Mozambique's greatest poet. He was impressed by Mutola's effortless speed and invited her to start running with his son, Stelio, an athletics coach at Desportivo de Maputo.

She was a natural. By the end of her first season in 1988, Mutola had a silver medal for the 800m at the African Championships in Algeria. At the Seoul Olympics, she recorded a personal best time of 2 minutes 4.36 seconds. She was still only 15.

But facilities and chances to compete were poor in Mozambique. Although Mutola won gold over 800m and 1 500m at the African Championships in Cairo, Egypt in 1990, her times were not improving. Then the president of the Assembly in the Mozambican government, Marcelino dos Santos, offered to help. He arranged a scholarship for Mutola to study in the United States.

In March 1991, Mutola arrived in Eugene, Oregon. Under her new coach, Margo



**“I know I am a role model.”**

Fund, she soon made rapid progress. She came fourth at the 1991 World Championships in Tokyo, Japan, but had a disappointing 1992 Olympics. Mutola finally came of age at the 1993 World Championships in Stuttgart, Germany when she won the 800m gold medal by one of the biggest margins ever seen at a major championship.

**H**er time was an African record of 1 minute 55.43. She was the fastest athlete outside Eastern Europe in history.

Mutola's has made it from rags to riches. But the Mercedes Benz she won in Germany and the bank balance which can be expected to grow by thousands of rands each year, are the result of hard work and dedication.

She used to train twice a day

but found training very hard once a day suited her better, so she changed her routine. That system took her to the world title.

With studies filling the rest of her days, she has little time for the fun and parties which are part and parcel of lives of many young women. She is seen as a serious person because she is involved in serious business. On the track, she concentrates hard and rarely shows emotion.

Off the track, she is different. She smiles a lot as she talks and is quietly confident, but humble.

“I know I am a role model for Mozambicans and I suppose for all African women. When I talk to people, I always emphasise the importance of setting realistic goals and working hard to achieve them,” she says.

Earlier this year, she held a coaching clinic in Soweto. She told women she expected to see more black women athletes doing well in South Africa in future.

Mutola proves that black South African women can do well. She comes from a similar environment to most South

Africans, unlike runners from Kenya and Ethiopia. They train in countries with thin air and high hills. When she was growing up, her country was at war. She has faced even greater hardships than many township youngsters here.

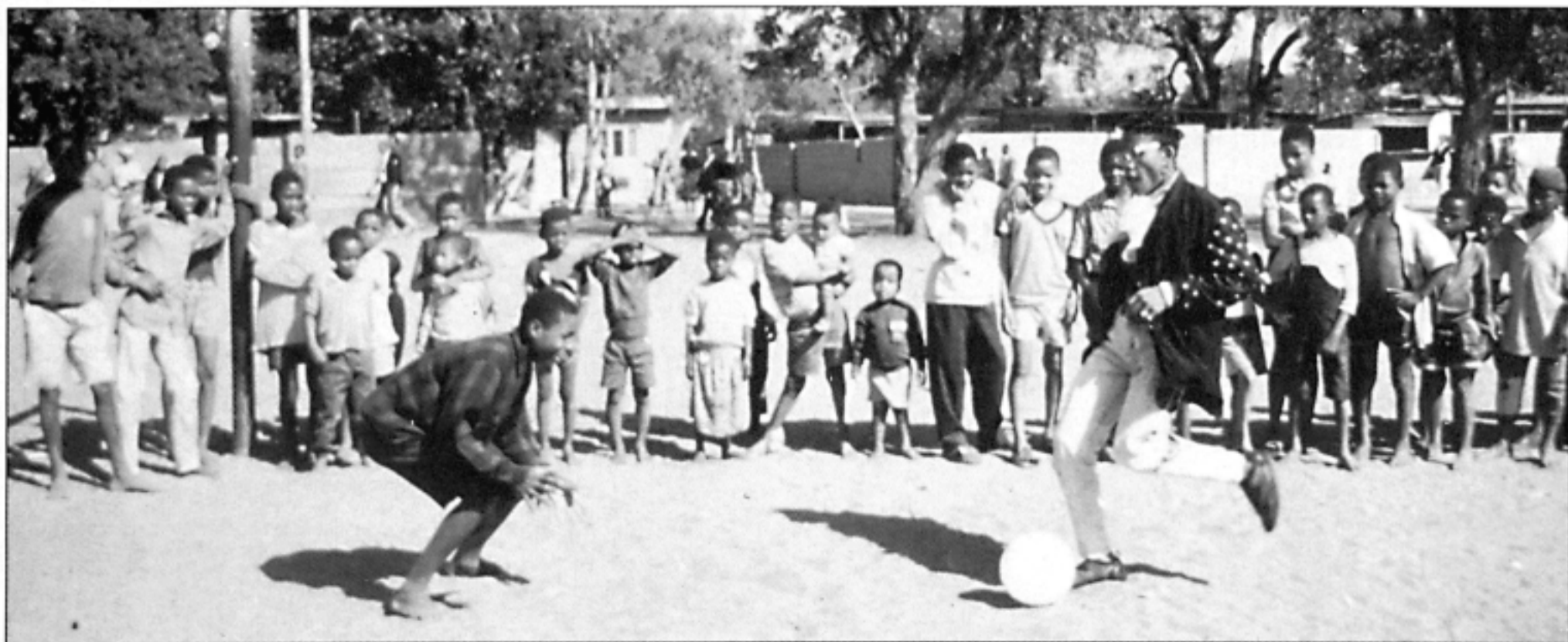
This year, Mutola won the World Cup and Goodwill Games, and lowered her best time to 1 minute 55.19 seconds. Next year will provide the true test.

“I will focus on defending my world title in Gothenburg, Sweden. I would also like to defend my indoor title,” she says. “But this is something I must still discuss with my coach, because indoor racing takes a lot out of me.”

Mutola's life is not all athletics. This year she moved into her own place and rediscovered the cooking she had learnt from her mother.

Her education is just as important as running.

“In two years, I will finish my present studies and then I want to go to university,” says Mutola. “That is my dream, too.” ★



**Mutola shows off her skills at a coaching session in Soweto**

# Should the sisters do it for themselves?

**Women activists are still debating how the struggle for our rights should be carried forward. Some believe we can use parliament and existing political parties and pressure groups. Others say we need a new independent movement which unites us all as women. Rosalee Telela spoke to some campaigners who feel that independence is the right road**

**“W**omen cannot pin their hopes on what women in parliament could achieve for them. Women do not even form half of the number of members of parliament — and their hands are tied by the parties they belong to.”

That's the view of Debby Bonnin, a member of the Agenda Collective which publishes a journal about women and gender. She firmly believes that “we should form a national independent women's movement which will put the interests of women first, as opposed to the interests of political parties, churches, unions or civics.” Those who agree with Bonnin argue that such issues as polygamy, abortion, violence against women

and equality in the home come to the top of the agenda. They say this won't happen in broad organisations with wide aims, or in women's groups which are part of such organisations. What they want is an organisation run by women and focused on women's needs.

Asha Moodley, Head of AZAPO's Secretariat for Information and Research, puts it like this: “Women need an independent movement for direction. We need to grab power into our hands so we can define our own agendas and policies and not just slot into political parties.”

And Daphne Mashile-Nkosi, co-ordinator of the Rural Women's Movement (RWM), says: “Political parties can raise

Some say that, when it comes to women's issues, party politics shouldn't matter

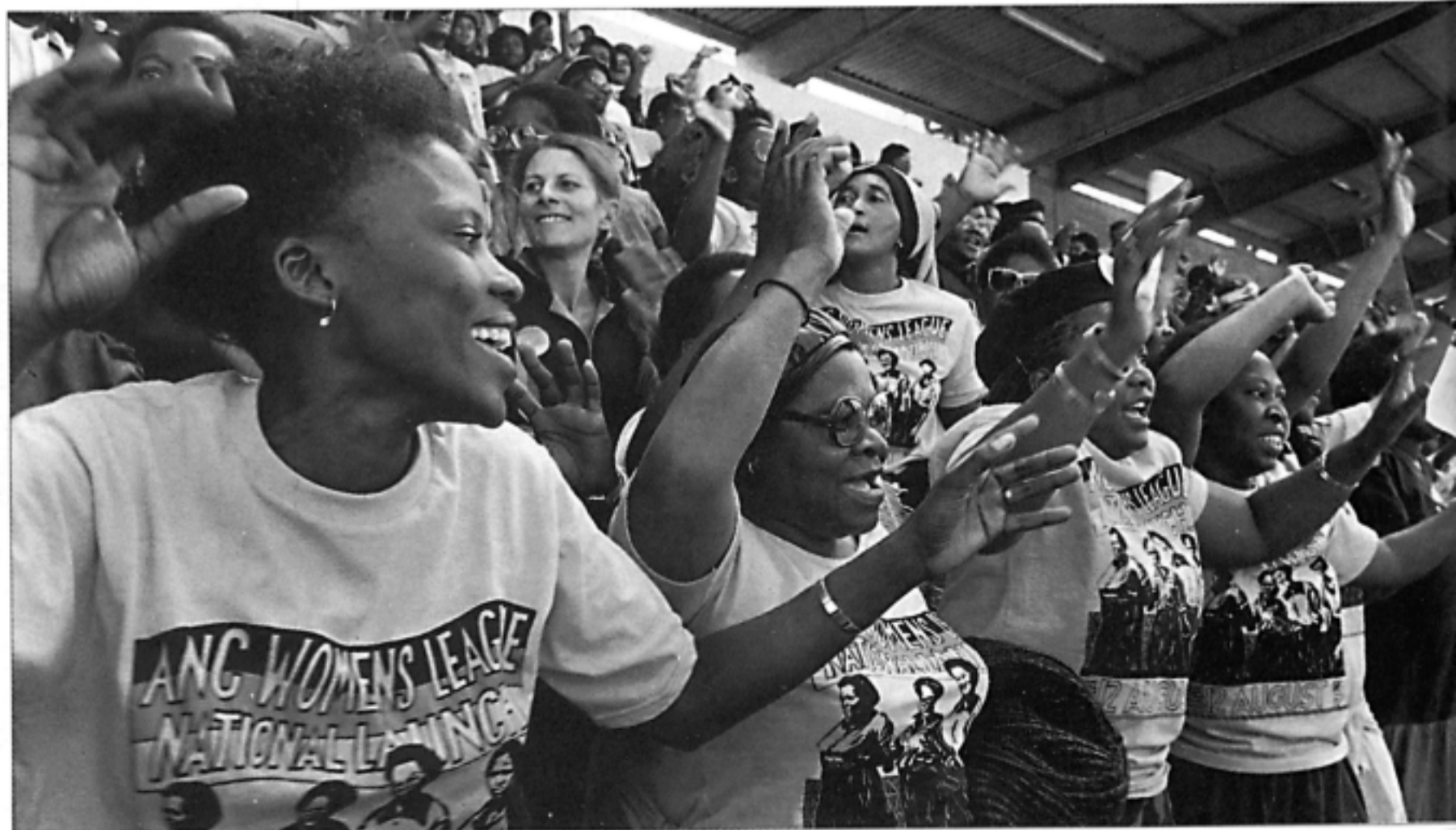


Photo: Rafs Mayet



**ANC Women's League's Ntombi Shope and Agenda's Debby Bonnini**

the issues in parliament. Women need a platform where it will be easy for them to raise their issues." Nkosi gives her own experience as an example.

"The RWM is the baby of the Transvaal Action Committee (TRAC) — just like many women's organisations are part and parcel of political movements and parties. But now we're starting to feel the need to do things on our own."

**B**ut do women from different backgrounds really have so much in common? Bonnini admits that bringing everyone together will be hard.

"It will be a struggle in itself. Women in this country are divided by race, class, urban and rural experience, religion, language, culture... These differences could limit what an independent women's movement can achieve. Take the issue of abortion. Some women might want it legalised while others from, say, church groups, might take a different standpoint."

Ntombi Shope of the ANC Women's League disagrees.

"Things like race and class will not matter because the movement will be looking at the problems of all women. And coming together will help women to understand each other. It will break down the walls between black and white, urban and rural, working and middle class."

Mashile-Nkosi feels that the major problem will be many black women's lack of organising skills. "Women need to be able to do things on their own. But we cannot say people must be independent without giving them the necessary skills: how to run an organisation, draw budgets and call and chair meetings."

Moodley agrees, pointing to the weakness of existing organisations. "Unless we first strengthen the existing women's organisations which will be active in this new movement, it will be just a dream."

What would such a movement look like? Mashile-Nkosi suggests that it should be based on campaigns around specific issues.

"People should first form national organisations based on the issues they deal with. For example, rural women could form a national group dealing with special problems: polygamy, land rights, inheritance and property.

"As a united force, they can be part of an independent women's movement. They, and women from other groups can come together and organise around problems they all face, such as rape. The movement will do the job of networking among the different groups and bringing them together."

Bonnini agrees that issues, not individuals or groups, will be what unites women in one movement.

"If we had such a movement today, for example, we'd be able to challenge the growing pornography industry in this country. The few people challenging it today only speak from a conservative viewpoint. Nobody is taking the line that pornography oppresses all women."

Shope feels the movement must have a structure which allows individual membership.

**"W**omen must be able to make decisions for themselves without worrying about what their organisations or parties will say."

However, all agree that a strong structure will be needed to communicate effectively among so many interest groups and individuals. Mashile-Nkosi feels this is vital: "To have a strong network that brings people together



**WNC's Annemarie Nutt and RWM's Daphne Nkosi**

it needs a structure with representatives from different organisations. Otherwise the information will not reach the members and so there will be no unified lobbying on common issues.”

**O**ne of the few examples of women’s pressure groups South Africa has had so

the WNC remained tied to their political parties.

“It was dominated by political parties. Because of its nature, issues such as abortion were

**“Coming together will help women to understand each other. It will break down the walls between black and white, urban and rural, working and middle class . . .”**



**For women in Zambia, family violence was an issue which united them**

far is the Women’s National Coalition (WNC). This brought together women from different political organisations to lobby for more attention to women’s voices at the multi-party talks. It had some success, but was never really independent — women in

never resolved,” says Bonnin.

Moodley feels the WNC never reached out to most ordinary women.

“The majority of women have never heard of it or the Women’s Charter it drew up.”

And Annemarie Nutt, WNC

National Executive member suggests reasons for this. She feels that WNC organised in a top-down way, taking on too much of the character of political parties which dominated it.

While Bonnin and Moodley feel there might be scope for building of the WNC’s foundation, Nutt doesn’t. “Unlike the WNC, this new movement will need to be politically independent and to organise from the bottom up.”

**S**o an independent women’s movement will need to have room for both interest groups and individuals. It will need to break down barriers between women from different backgrounds. It will have to be democratic - but very effective in mobilising its members around common issues. Finding a way of organising which can achieve all these aims is going to be difficult.

But the women SPEAK interviewed believe it would be worth the effort. After all, achieving true equality between men and women means turning many things upside down. In Debby Bonnin’s words, “it needs revolutionary change.” ✪

# Putting beliefs before people

At the Population Conference in Cairo in September, a row about abortion hijacked all the attention. But what was the conference really about – and why did it matter?

**T**he United Nations held the world's biggest meeting on population in Cairo in September. People from governments, aid donors, health organisations, religious and women's groups were all there.

## Why was the meeting held?

The world's population is growing so fast that it will double in 40 years. This matters to families — especially mothers — who have to bear and look after the children. It matters to governments who have to provide jobs and social services for more and more people. And it matters to the world. Some people believe that resources like farmland and forests will be used up too fast by these growing numbers of people. Others believe the real problem is that resources are in the hands of a few rich people and countries.

## What did the meeting propose?

The meeting wanted governments and donor agencies to agree to a final document which would promise 20% of their budgets for:

- ◆ Food aid and clean water. These would help more children survive

## By Gwen Ansell

to become adults so parents would settle for smaller families.

- ◆ Basic education. People who are educated marry later and have smaller families.

- ◆ Loans for poor people. Credit gives people the chance to work their way out of poverty. If women can earn, they have a reason to space their children and the power to do so.

- ◆ Better basic health care, including access to family planning. This can save the lives of women and children. Women die every year because they have given birth too often, or are too young or too old, or cannot get to a hospital.

At present, governments in poor countries spend only 13% of their budgets on these things. Donor agencies spend only 7% of their money on them.

## What happened at the meeting?

In fact, most of the week was spent arguing about family planning. Although this section was only a small part of the final document, representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and from some Islamic countries wanted it cut out. They did not want the

document to talk about "safe motherhood" or "reproductive health," sex education for teenagers or sexual relations between unmarried people.

The Catholics argued that these things added up to an OK for abortion and were against the will of God. The Islamic representatives said they were culturally unacceptable in their countries. Women's groups from Catholic and Moslem countries at the conference did not agree.

The row about this became so big that it hijacked the whole meeting. It was the only topic the newspapers and TV covered. And to make sure that everyone would sign the final document, it was made much weaker than most women had hoped.

Many activists felt that the row had let governments and donors off the hook. Because the final document was so weak, they left the meeting without making any strong promise to spend more on food aid, water, education, credit schemes and health. Meanwhile, at least half a million women die as a result of pregnancy each year. Women's and health activists say the conference had a real chance to end these deaths. They say that chance was sacrificed to keep religious leaders happy. ☛

# Struggle in a war zone

Visiting Palestinian activist Cedar Duaybis spoke to *Rosalee Telela* about her battles for women's rights

**“W**omen want their freedom. We want to own property and have access to education and jobs. We don't want to be told who to get married to. We don't want to have to take our husbands' nationality.”

The speaker could be any woman, anywhere, fighting man-made laws. In fact, she is a Palestinian, Cedar Duaybis. Peace is being negotiated between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Israeli government. And Palestinian women want their voices to be heard.

Fifty-seven Muslim and Christian women's organisations have joined together and drawn up a charter. They want the charter to be included in the new Palestinian constitution which is being drafted as part of the peace process. Duaybis was in South Africa recently and spoke about this. She told SPEAK the struggle was more complex than just national liberation.

During the Second World War in Europe, Nazi governments murdered more than six million Jews. For a long time some European Jews — called “Zionists” — had felt that the only way to stop this kind of treatment was for Jews to have their own homeland.

They approached the European powers for land. First, the British government suggested that all the Jews should be sent to Uganda. The Zionists waged a guerilla war in protest. Finally it was agreed to

plant the Jews in Palestine.

But nobody had consulted the Palestinians, who already lived there.

In 1948, Zionists took over Palestine and established the state of Israel. From then until this year's peace, Israelis and Palestinians have been at war.

In 1948, Duaybis' family in

Photo: SPEAK



**Cedar Duaybis**

Nazareth, who were Christians, fell under Israeli military occupation.

“We lived in Nazareth as second class citizens. We could not get any of the benefits and privileges Jews enjoyed.”

After 15 years, Duaybis married an Anglican priest. The church moved them to the West

Bank — a part of Palestine which Israel took over in 1967.

“I was living under occupation once more. This time, it was worse. My Israeli citizenship was taken away.

“Our lives were ruled by military orders. In the West Bank, Palestinians could not speak, move or even pray freely.”

Christians like Duaybis are a minority in Palestine. But she says they are a part of the Palestinian people.

“Christians and Muslims share much culture and history.

“Together we are struggling for an independent Palestinian state.”

These problems and many others led Palestinians to wage an armed struggle against Israel, led by the PLO. One of the first women to join the PLO in the early 1970s was a Muslim called Leila Ghalid. When she exchanged her long dress and veil for trousers and a gun she was not just protesting against Israel. She was also taking a stand against male dominance under Muslim laws.

**D**uaybis points out that many women share Ghalid's struggle.

“Women also suffer harassment and detention. They support male family members imprisoned in Israeli jails.”

But some Muslims want a Palestine state governed by strict Islamic law which would send women back inside their homes.

“This will not be acceptable to



Photo: Southlight

us as Christians, and as women. We don't want to dress, act and believe as they demand. We want democracy."

All Palestinians, including Christians, have to obey the Muslim Family Codes. This lays down the law for marriage, polygamy, divorce, maintenance, custody of children and inheritance.

Says Duaybis: "If a woman wants to renew her passport, she must have her father's permission if she is not married, or her husband's. Women are pressured to give up their share of inheritance, which is half of what men get. Especially in rural areas, women are forced to give it to their brothers.

"In the West Bank, people do not have health insurance or pensions. A woman's survival depends on how many sons she can produce to look after her when she is old. So mothers favour their sons.

"Even our Christian churches follow the general law, Muslim law. They think it's their moral duty to speak against contraception, abortion and sex education. But I don't think women should pay the price of keeping what male religious leaders see as a 'moral' society."

Duaybis says many women are now refusing to pay that price.

**O**ppressed by both Israeli military occupation and traditional Palestinian male dominance, women "are asking for equality. We know it is possible in a democratic state."

But Duaybis says success will not be easy.

"Men look down on us. They make jokes about our struggle. They continue to take decisions that affect us without thinking of our needs."

And she believes Palestinian women must stand on their own

### Israeli police arresting a Palestinian woman after a demonstration

feet.

"We need to work out our own kind of democracy and feminism. If we take them from elsewhere, they will not work for us.

"Women who are aware of their oppression need to organise and educate other women — not only about suffering, but what we can do to end it." ★



Graphic: Christian Aid

# The Sacrifice

By Ama Ababio

**F**or the fourth or fifth time, Tecla removed her glossy nail polish. Somehow it wasn't right and it certainly didn't match the dress she was planning to wear to the dinner at the home of her husband Gwinyai's boss.

Another dinner! She was tired of all the dinners and dances. She moved around from place to place. But at the end she felt empty. What was the purpose of it all? she had asked Gwinyai again and again. Every time, she risked another argument. Their last one still flamed in her memory.

"But Tecla, what do you want me to do? It's my image. I have to keep up my image..."

"Image! Image! Image! I'm sick and tired of hearing that word. Where is the man I married? Where was his image then?"

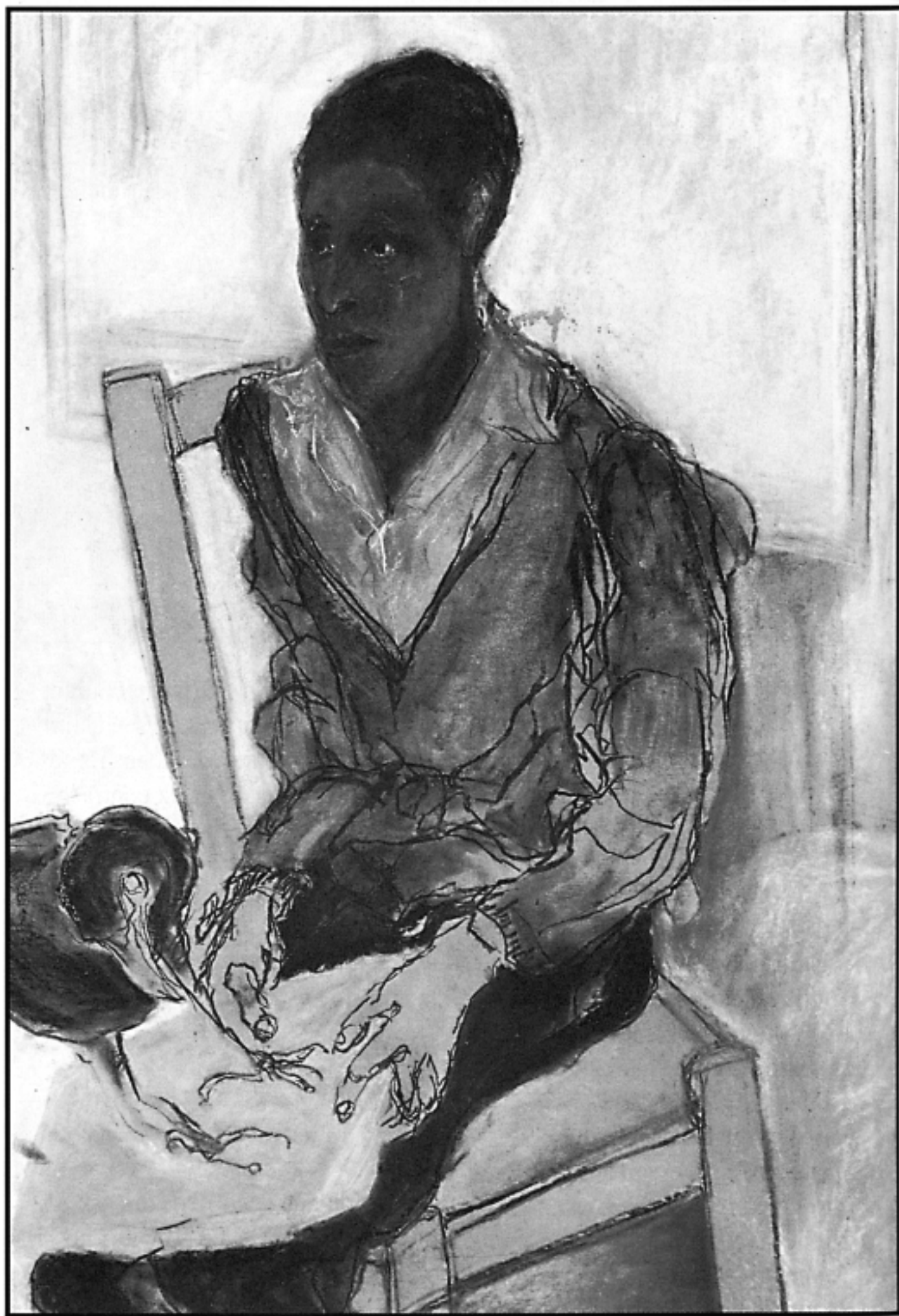
"Tecla, you are reasoning like a half-wit..."

"How dare you say such a thing! Half-wit? Yes! Put Tecla in a lifestyle that only needs her to use half her brain anyway, and then you call her a half-wit! Didn't I sacrifice a brilliant academic career to marry you and have children?"

There, she had got it out. That's what had been making her life miserable. Gwinyai had marched out in a rage, slamming the door so hard she thought it would fall of its hinges.

She knew what was wrong. Now she had to put it right.

When she had decided to marry Gwinyai, she knew she would have to settle down for a



Picture: Berry Bickle

while, raise a family and support Gwinyai in his career. Then, when the children grew up, she would resume hers. Then she learned that life cannot be planned in the way you make up a shopping list and take only what you want from

the shelves in the shop. Life didn't serve up only what you ordered.

Gwinyai's job had become a monster. She had been happy for him when the promotions came

**turn to page 35**



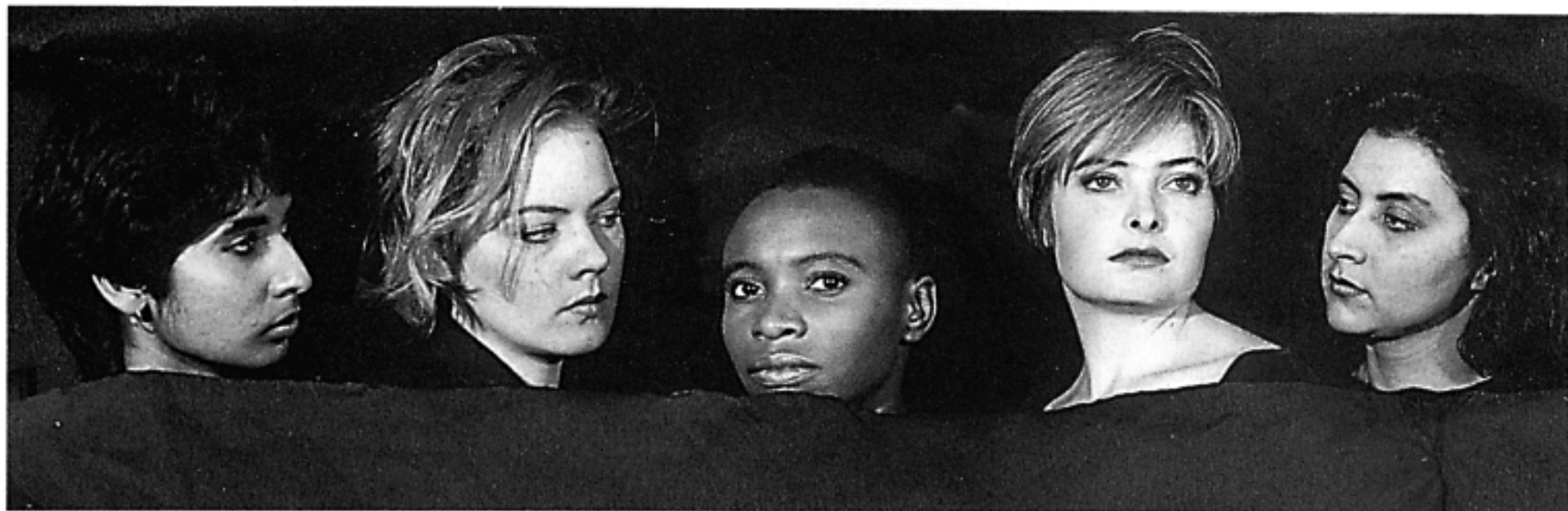


Photo: Arts Alive

# Women behind bars

*Rosalee Telela watched a play which reclaims some untold stories*

*Prison – a place where time has no meaning, where people gather like rats in a hole. This space where one cannot breathe or eat. Where sleep becomes a sanctuary and death...a yearning.*

*This Pollsmoor, John Vorster, Sun City, Robben Island, Heilbron...*

**T**hese are words from the play *Manje!*, performed by a group of women actors at the Johannesburg Arts Alive Festival in September.

*Manje* tells the story of women in South African prisons. In prison, lives are ruled by orders shouted by wardens. Bodies get sore from sleeping on steel beds. Prisoners fall asleep and wake up to the sound of gates slamming shut along long corridors and keys endlessly turning in locks.

*Manje* is partly taken from *A Snake With Ice Water*, a book of interviews, stories and poems by South African women prisoners. The actors worked with the book's editor, Barbara Schreiner and interviewed women at the

Johannesburg prison which people call "Sun City."

"The warders allowed us full access and privacy with prisoners," reports *Manje*'s producer, Firdoze Bulbulia. "But afterwards, we got a phone call asking: 'Who exactly are you...?' Women really wanted to talk about the reality of their lives. They felt that prison tried to make them fit into the outside world, but didn't really change them or turn them away from crime."

That's important for Bulbulia, who sees *Manje* as being about more than prison. "Prison provides very striking pictures and stories which tell you about life in general. Women can be prisoners in their homes. The men in their lives often act like jailors. We wanted *Manje* to make the audience think about those aspects too."

The actors call themselves the Matara and Mangoes Theatre Group. "The name is a play on words," says Bulbulia. "Matara is slang for cherries – which is how men often refer to women. And I remember hawkers in Cape Town

when I was a kid calling out: 'Mangoes, mangoes; where the women are the man goes'."

Because many black women cannot read or write, their stories are often lost. The actors want to reclaim these stories and empower women by bringing their words alive. They hope to make more women's stories part of what is taught by the education system.

**W**here will *Manje* go next? "We hope to perform the play in schools, maybe even take it back to Sun City for a performance. We are looking at whether we can make it into a video too," says Bulbulia.

She hopes *Manje* will inspire other women actors to go out into the community, collect women's unwritten stories and make them live on stage. As the play says: *You can't kill the spirit. She is like the mountains. Old and strong, old and strong. You can't kill the spirit and not the song, not when it's sung the whole world around!* ✪

Forget what we look like. Listen to our music like you do men's, say women musicians.

Gwen Ansell spoke to Mfa Kera

# Strength not glamour

**Mfa Kera: Hard to be accepted as a leader in music**

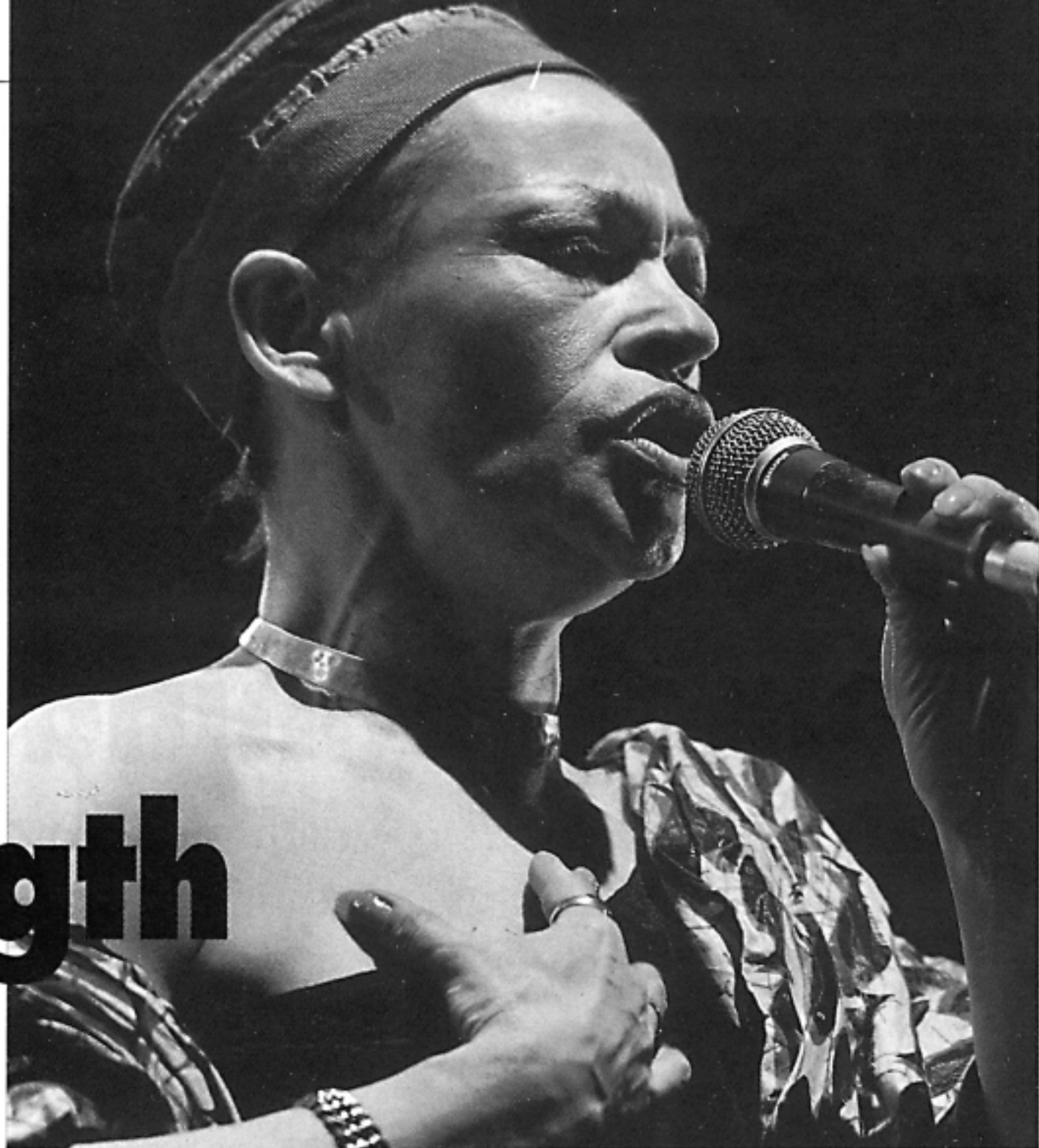


Photo: Mofhaheli Mahlabo

**J**azz singer and songwriter Mfa Kera grew up in Madagascar and Senegal. She has worked in Los Angeles, Paris and now Berlin. Her wide experience has made her impatient with old-fashioned ideas — including the prejudices of her male colleagues in show business.

“This machismo sh\*t is just as bad as racism. Women are oppressed all over the world. And in my profession, I’ve been band leader and composer. It’s not expected for a woman to lead and I have felt that from many men I have worked with.”

Kera was lucky. Unlike most parents, her father supported her ambition to be a singer.

“He only said: ‘OK, but you must get your school-leaving diploma first.’ But many parents don’t want a daughter in music. For them, it’s not a respectable career for women.”

Kera was in Johannesburg in October, to perform and research South African cultural projects.

“I have talked to women singers here. We’ve had many of the same experiences: especially not being taken seriously by the men.”

In a rare tribute at the launch of his first Ekhaya tour, jazz pianist Abdullah Ibrahim said, “Women are the foundation of jazz today... (but) sometimes they are forgotten.”

And it is true that as early as the 1940s, South Africa jazz bands were popular because they featured women singers. The first was probably Emily Koenane who sang with Willard “Zuluboy” Cele’s Jazz Maniacs.

Between the 1940s and 1960s, singers like Sophiatown’s Dolly Rathebe (still going strong with the Elite Swingsters), Sophie Mngcina, Miriam Makeba and Dorothy Masuka were stars. They sang African versions of American hits, although Masuka was and still is a talented songwriter.

“Despite all the political problems,” says Rathebe, “it was a magical time. I sang away some of the sorrow around me.”

But this rich musical tradition of the shebeens and variety shows has not been kept up. Today, far fewer women look to jazz music as a career. And

those who try, find the male-dominated scene discouraging. Talented young bass guitar player Lipalesa Lebabo has been trying to find the right band since she came to Johannesburg from Lesotho. "The problem isn't the music. But the guys feel that if you want to join 'their' band, you must form a relationship with one of them."

Lebabo isn't alone. Many women have been driven out of music by the expectation that a woman working with a band will act as unpaid cook, washer-woman or even wife to male band members.

Top vocalist Felicia Marion feels that "male egos stand in the way, especially when you have to correct them about what key to use. Even today, guys have an attitude." She advises aspiring jazzwomen not to be put off. "Constant rehearsal makes you stay at the top. Don't look for glamour – what makes a musician is a feel for the music."

**A**lto saxophonist and flugelhorn player Pam Mortimer agrees: "Horn playing is not a glamorous enterprise. You can't look glamorous with puffed-out cheeks and I think that tends to put a lot of young girls off."

Music promoter Lorraine

McCarter enjoys this challenge to society's image of women as decorations: "It's such a change from the women who are used on stage only to jiggle their boobs and bums. That's why it gives me joy to see a woman get up on stage and play really well."

Mfa Kera, too, has experienced the glamour trap. "I went through that when I was recording artist for the RCA label. The idea for them was that a singer must glitter and show her breasts - but do you really need that to sell your voice? Once, for television in Monte Carlo they made me up, put something idiotic around my eyes. I looked in the mirror and it was so silly I could hardly sing. I wanted to laugh."

Despite this, there are still young women struggling to make it in jazz: vocalists like Wendy Mseleku and instrumentalist like Lebabo and Cape Town saxophonist Desi Anders. At Johannesburg's newest jazz school, Johnny Mekoa's PWV Music Academy in Daveyton, the big band saxophone line is led by two women: Sue Moganedi and Muareen Mahlangu. One-third of the students at Natal University's Centre for Jazz And Popular Music are women.

Perhaps most promisingly, one vice-president of the newly-

formed Musicians Union of South Africa (MUSA) is a woman: jazz vocalist Helenne Ulster. Ulster has already spoken about the lack of work opportunities for South African jazzwomen.

Mfa Kera feel that one way to counter male dominance is by women organising their own musical projects. "When I went to Germany, I found that the feminist movement was very strong there. There was support for women's music projects, which was great because it allowed you to carry out original ideas.

**F**or example, I toured around a number of women's festivals in Europe with a vocal project, unaccompanied singing by women of African descent called 'Women In Jazz'. Me, I've always been fighting, always saying: 'no'.

You have to be strong to do good jazz improvisation, so you have to find ways to develop your strength as a person." ☆

*Parts of this article first appeared in the 1994 South African Women Artists' Diary. The Diary profiles women cultural workers and their organisations across the Southern African region. For more details contact the Zimbabwe Women In Contemporary Culture Trust (ZWCCT) P O Box 2192, Harare, Zimbabwe.*



Graphic: Judy Seidman

# A crime to beat

The decision to take your abusive partner to court is not made easily. There is, however, a law, the Family Violence Act, to back you up

**By Ann Eveleth**

**S**hamilla's husband tormented and degraded her for 19 years. Her three daughters also suffered badly in their unhappy home. Forty-six year old Shamilla decided to leave that life behind three years ago. Hers is a true story. Names, however, have been changed to protect her.

"At first Praveen seemed very polite and caring. Then I discovered he was a liar. He played on my sympathy and we got married. Five months after our first child was born, he beat me. That was the beginning. It continued throughout our marriage."

As the violence got worse, Praveen took to kicking her in the stomach. Even when she was pregnant. Shamilla tried to leave him many times.

"He used to promise the world. I guess I desperately wanted to believe he loved me."

The beatings would soon start over.

"My father had warned me not to marry him. He told me if I went ahead, there would be no divorce in this family. So, I didn't have my family's support.

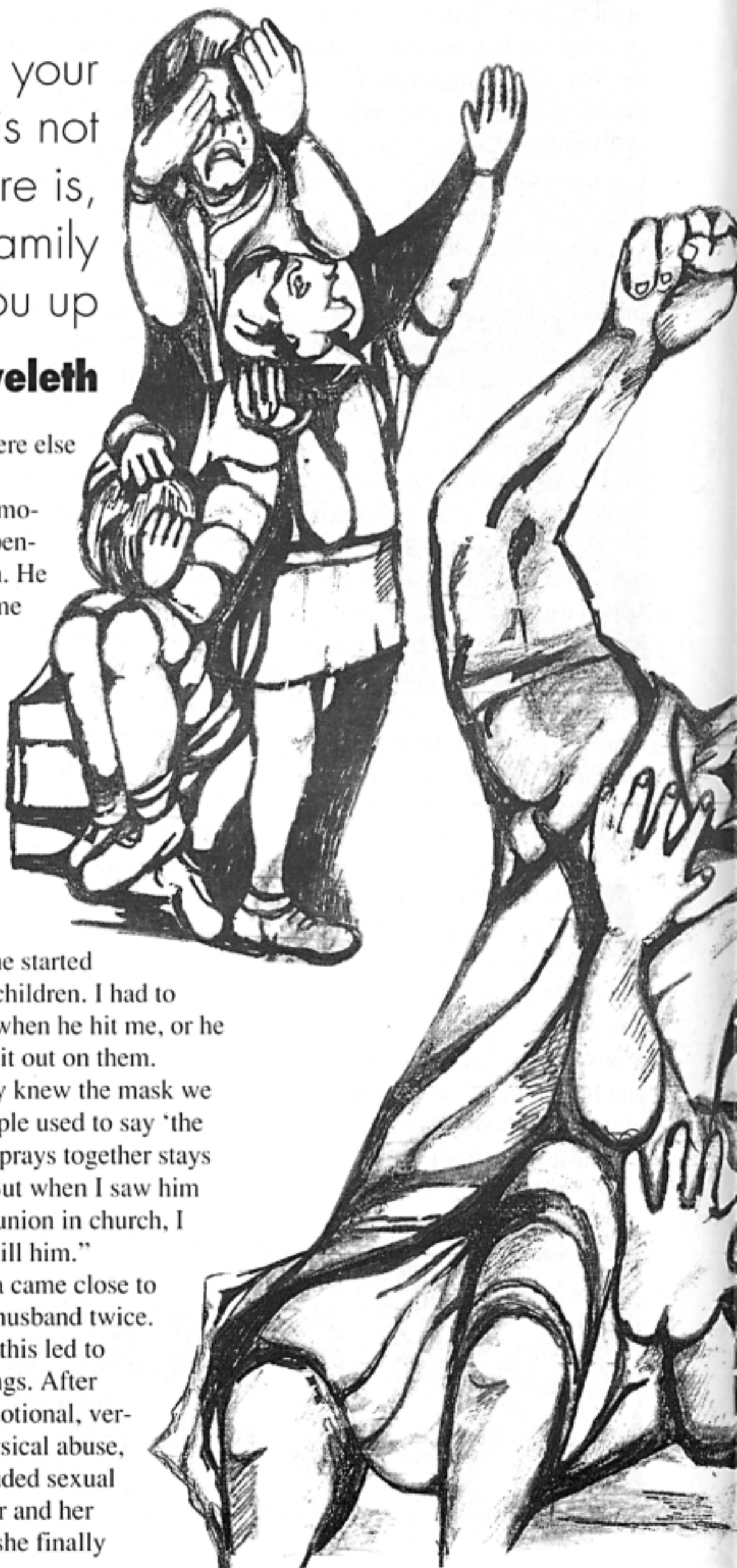
I had nowhere else to go.

"I was emotionally dependent on him. He would tell me my family didn't want me. He used to say: 'You will get a hiding because you are not worth it'.

"Later, he started hitting my children. I had to keep quiet when he hit me, or he would take it out on them.

"Nobody knew the mask we put on. People used to say 'the family that prays together stays together.' But when I saw him take communion in church, I wanted to kill him."

Shamilla came close to killing her husband twice. Both times this led to more beatings. After years of emotional, verbal and physical abuse, which included sexual abuse of her and her daughters, she finally



Graphic: Sanna Naidoo

broke free. This was not easy.

"In 1989, I started to divorce my husband. When my mother heard this she had a heart attack and died. The family blamed me. But they had never tried to help me. When I told my mother I was being beaten by my husband, she refused to help."

**S**hamilla felt guilty and hopeless. She stopped the divorce going ahead three times. However, with the help of a priest and a friend, Shamilla decided she deserved better.

"Once I realised I was very important to God, and started loving myself, it was a lot easier to get out."

Like many abused women, Shamilla often thought she was alone. That she had done something to deserve a beating.

Not true, says the Durban-based Advice Desk for Abused Women. They say one out of every 10 women in South Africa is either physically or sexually assaulted by her hus-

band or live-in partner. Other support groups say the number is higher — one in six.

The Desk says abuse happens in many ways. Sexual abuse is when your partner demands or forces you to have sex when you don't want to. Physical abuse is when he beats, kicks, or slaps you. This also includes tying you up, keeping you out of the home, or not allowing you to eat. Emotional abuse is when he threatens, criticises, and embarrasses you. He may keep you on your own and try to control every part of your life. All these happen over and over, and usually get worse with time. Victims, or survivors of domestic violence, have a right to put an end to it.

South African women won an important victory when the Family Violence Act was passed in December 1993. This was too late for Shamilla, but she is using it as a weapon to help other women.

The Act makes it easier for women (and men) to get a court order preventing a partner from abusing them. Once a court order is given, if the abuser breaks the rules, he will be arrested.

**A**nyone can get a court order. You no longer need an attorney or advocate. You pay less than R100 for the court order to be served. If you cannot afford it, the magistrate can decide you don't have to pay.

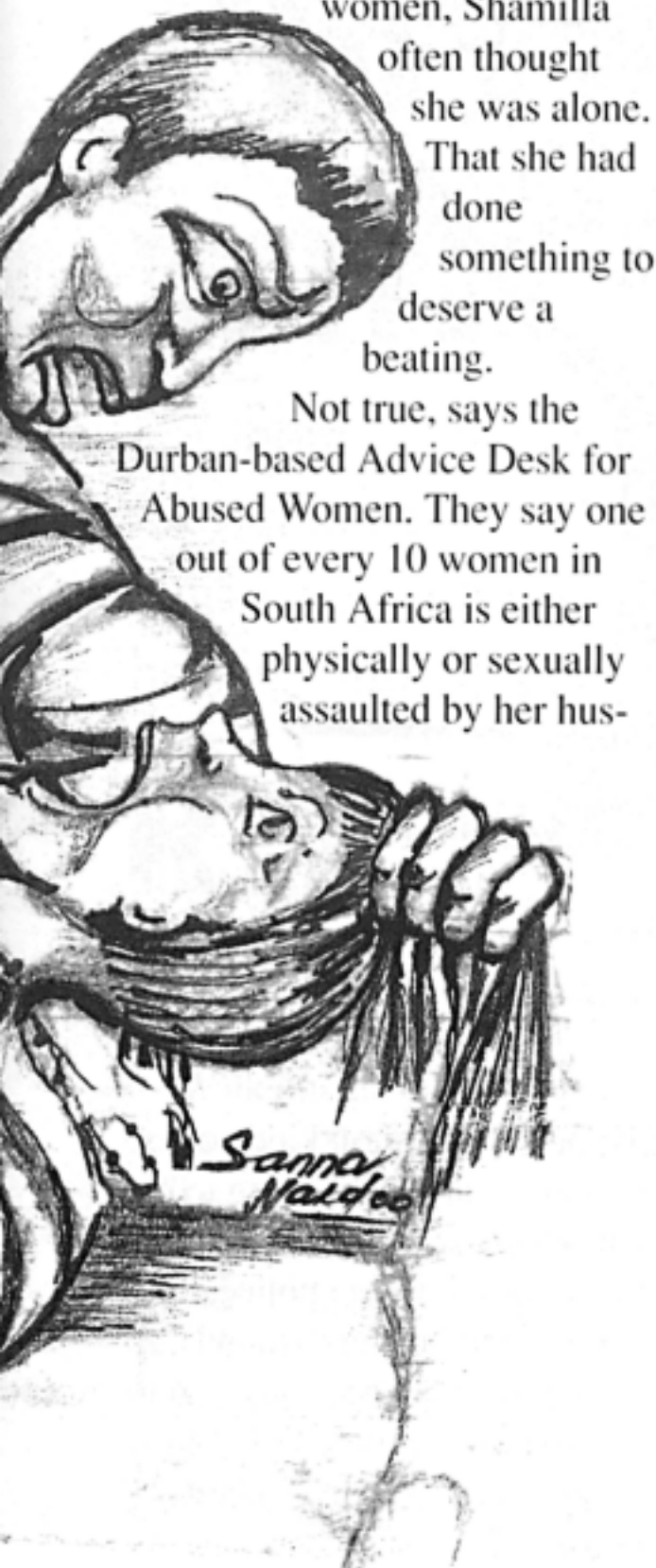
Yasmin Baccus, co-ordinator for the Desk, called the Act a "wonderful victory for women."

Both women and men can use the Act. It sees rape in marriage as a crime. Official recognition of a woman's right to charge her husband with rape is expected

## How to use the new law if you are abused

- 1. Go to the clerk of any magistrate's court or to a social worker. Tell them your problem. Ask for a court order.**
- 2. The clerk will open a file for you. They will give you an application form, if you don't have one. Fill in your and your partner's details. Explain in an affidavit why you want a court order.**
- 3. Swear the truth of your affidavit in front of a police officer or any commissioner of oaths.**
- 4. The clerk will give your file to the magistrate who will then make a decision. If your application is accepted, the magistrate will sign an order and a warrant of arrest. This does not mean they will arrest your partner. He will only be arrested if he breaks the rules to protect you set by the court.**

◆ The Advice Desk for Abused Women has a 24 hour Hot Line to deal with crisis calls. The telephone number is: (031) 820-2862. For further information write to: The Advice Desk, University of Durban Westville, Private Bag X 54001, Durban, 4000.





Graphic: Sanna Naidoo

soon.

People should be made aware of the Act, she says, which also states people are expected to report child abuse if they know it is happening.

“How can we expect people to report if they don’t know their rights?” asked Baccus.

In August 1994, the Desk held a workshop for magistrates, messengers of the court and

lawyers. They wanted to find ways of making the Act work for people.

**C**hatsworth magistrate, Betty Rawheath, who attended the workshop, said most women do not understand how the court works.

“We find a lot of women

don’t fill in the affidavit (sworn statement giving details of abuse) properly.”

She said, however, it was easier now for women to do this than before.

You can be sure the Advice Desk for Abused Women is making it their job to educate

women about these kinds of problems, and everything to do with the new law. They also see the need to educate police, magistrates and lawyers around domestic violence. They aim to prevent more women like Shamilla from living in hell at home. ☆



A leading American toy shop, Toys 'R' Us, has decided to stop selling certain toy guns which look like real guns.

This follows two incidents in September in which New York police officers shot two teenagers carrying toy guns. The officers thought they were real. Other shops say they will stop selling such toy weapons. Some have already stopped. Food for thought for South African shops.

Photo: William Matlala

Adults in SA are being asked to hand in their guns – but children can buy them from the nearest hawker

# Playing with fire

For them, guns mean power and authority. Our children grow up aggressive and violent. And when we buy them toy guns, we are not helping the situation, writes *Doreen Zimbizi*

**R**at-a-tat-tat... I've killed you. I am Rambo. Strong and powerful. I've won.

These are the games our children play. And they are dangerous games.

Walk into any toy shop or department store and your child will rush to the toys section which has an unlimited supply of guns and ammunition. Some look so real.

My son turned five recently. High on the list of birthday presents he wanted was a toy gun, a battery operated car and a

teddy bear.

I have always explained to him that some things we cannot afford. I have also told him there are certain things I wouldn't buy even if I had the money. He is clever and understands.

"I want a gun mummy, please. My friend John has one. He won't let me to play with it. So if I have my own, I will not bother him."

"No ways my boy. I am not going to buy you a gun."

"But why mummy?" he

asked.

"There is just too much violence in this country. People use guns to kill each other. Guns are dangerous," I explained.

"All I want is a toy gun. I never said I wanted a real gun which makes fire. My toy gun is not going to hurt anyone."

My child has been watching too much television, I said to myself.

What effect do guns and power have on our children? What kind of adults are we raising our children to be?

I have told my son why I will not buy him a gun in future. I feel this is my contribution towards ending violence in our society.

**H**ow about all of us joining in? With toy guns costing between R9 and R40, isn't it time we invested that money in a better way of raising our children into responsible adults? How about buying them books, building blocks and other toys instead?

The National Children's Rights Committee (NCRC) feels that an anti-toy guns campaign should also be part of efforts to get rid of all unwanted guns.

"Our children, particularly in the townships have, for long time, been exposed to real guns. The fear is they are growing up with guns around them," said an NCRC spokesperson.

"Toy guns, especially those which look like real guns, should be banned. The problem is that the more they look like real guns, the more exciting it is for the children", she said.

"There is need for a campaign to disarm our children. South Africa has the capacity to run such a campaign effectively." ❁

# Why lose your house because you're a woman?

**Z**olile and Nthabiseng were married by a magistrate 38 years ago. For 30 years they lived in a house rented from the Soweto Council. The house is in Zolile's name, although they both contributed to paying for it.

When Zolile died Nthabiseng had to see to matters. She went to the Department of Home Affairs to register his death. Because Zolile had not made a will, Nthabiseng was told to take her eldest son to the magistrate so that her husband's estate (belongings), including the house, could be transferred to him.

This is what faces many African women who marry in civil law. After their husbands die they are told that customary inheritance applies to them. The regulations (rules) of the Black Administration Act state that when a woman is married out of community of property, the customary law of succession (inheritance) will apply to her husband's property when he dies. This means the eldest son inherits (gets) the property and the widow has no rights. One of the worst things which happens is that many women lose their homes to their sons.

**Use the Bill of Rights to challenge discrimination. Cathi Albertyn looks at how**

Does our new Bill of Rights help Nthabiseng and other women like her? We have to ask whether the Black Administration Act and its regulations violate (go against) Nthabiseng's human rights.

The Bill of Rights says all people are equal not matter their race, sex, gender, religion, language, belief or disability. It also says no person should suffer discrimination because of his or her race, sex or gender. It can be said that the Black Administration Act violates women's human rights of equality and freedom from discrimination.

Firstly, the law violates women's rights to equality because it puts women in a position of disadvantage. By not accepting women's rights to inherit from their husbands, the

law often has a terrible result — like women being forced to give up their homes.

Secondly, the law discriminates against women because it treats them unfairly. In this case it discriminates on the basis of sex and race. It puts African women in a worse position than men. White, Indian and 'coloured' women who may marry out of community of property are entitled (allowed) to inherit at least R125 000 of their husband's property when he dies without leaving a will. This law is called the Law of Intestate Succession. Intestate means when you die without leaving a will.

**W**hat practical steps can Nthabiseng take to challenge these violations of her human rights? Firstly, she can ask the Minister of Justice to allow the Law of Intestate to apply to her. Or she can get her sons to sign a sworn statement saying they do not want the house. The magistrate can then transfer the property to her.

The problem with these solutions is they do not challenge the law. They depend on the goodness and kindness of the minister or Nthabiseng's sons. If



## Inheritance is a right, not a privilege

they decide not to help, she is still left without the house.

Nthabiseng can get together with other women in the same position. They can organise with women's organisations to lobby the government to change the law. She can speak to her Member of Parliament and write letters to the Minister of Justice. She can also try and embarrass the government into changing the law by speaking to newspapers and the radio about how unjust the law is. All these are types of political action to persuade the government to change the law. These can work well and are also cheaper than using the courts.

**N**thabiseng may also try legal ways of changing the law by taking her case to the Constitutional Court. She can ask the court to strike the law down as being a violation of her human rights. If the law is struck down, the Law of Intestate Succession will apply to her. Once the Human Rights Commission is established, Nthabiseng would also be able to lay a complaint with the commission.

She can use both political and legal strategies at the same time. It is important that she does try and do something to challenge the law. It is much easier to do this with other women and women's organisations. It is up to us to challenge violations of our human rights and insist that the government acts to end them. ✪  
*Cathi Albertyn is a lawyer working at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies in Johannesburg.*

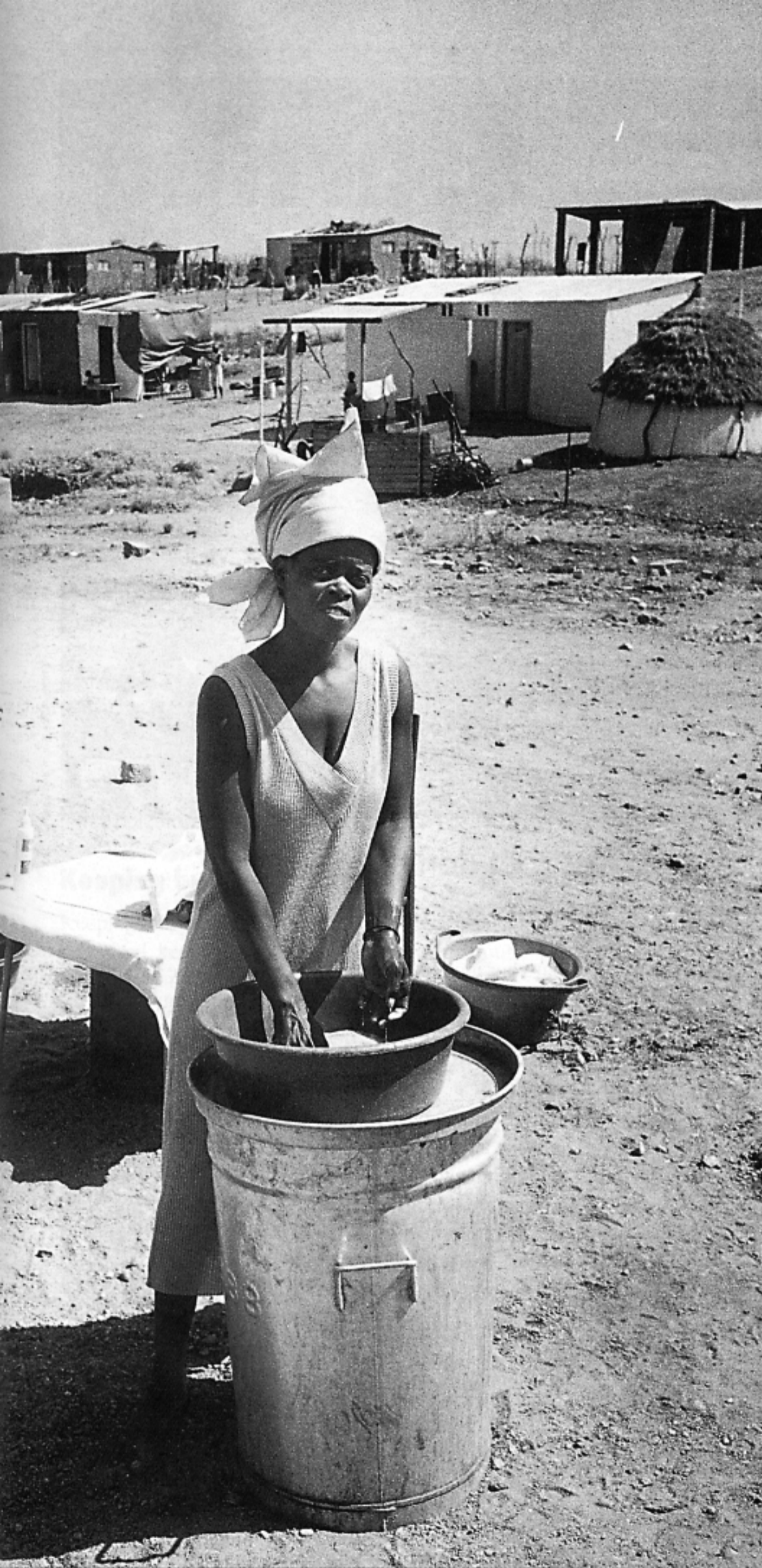


Photo: Africa South and East



Photo: Africa South and East

# Starting out

Want to set up a business, but don't know how?  
**SPEAK** offers some tips on getting started

**M**any of us dream of starting a small business and of being our own boss, like the Namibian in the photo. Often we don't have the money or skills to do it. It seems a risky thing to do. Don't be put off, says *Cindy Hermann*, who offers some ideas about starting a business.

## What to sell

When thinking about starting a business, think of something people need and will pay for. You may already have a skill or idea you can sell, or you may want to copy what someone else is selling. If you are going to sell something that is already available, you must make, sell or advertise the goods in ways that are different from other businesses. This will give you a better chance of success, as customers will return to you for what they can't get from anyone else.

## Make a plan

A good business plan is a must. It states how you will

put your idea into action. It helps you to see strengths and weaknesses. You can keep track of progress and problems. A good business plan can also help you to get a loan. It will show the bank you are sensible and serious.

A business plan will answer these questions:

- ◆ What am I going to sell?
- ◆ Do I have the skills? If not, where can I get them?
- ◆ Who are my customers? Why will they buy my product?
- ◆ Where will I sell? What will electricity, rent, water (overhead costs) be?
- ◆ Where will I get supplies? How much will they cost?
- ◆ What will I charge?
- ◆ How will I attract customers?
- ◆ How much money will I need to get started?

You need to make more money than you spend. When making your plan, think of all the possible costs. Include small things like stamps and envelopes,

as well as big costs, like rent and transport. Don't forget to add in a cost per hour for the time you work at your business.

Once you add all costs, work out if the price you will sell your goods at is enough to make a profit. If not, look at ways of cutting costs.

## Money to start with

You will need some money to start your business. This is the hard part. Maybe you have some savings? If not, can you borrow money? Would a bank give you a loan? Or could you get help from one of the organisations which help very small businesses get off the ground? (see addresses) Some organisations give training and advice, as well as loans.

## Advertise!

How can you best attract customers? Be creative. Are there ways of advertising which won't cost much money?

Signs, posters, graffiti, pamphlets, newspaper adverts, special prices, loud music and competitions are all ways of getting attention. Can you get into the news? The best publicity is satisfied customers who tell people how happy they are with your business.

## Keeping business going

Keeping things running smoothly is tough. Being organised, keeping good records, and having your business plan make it easier to cope with problems. And treat your customers well — think of how you would like to be treated and be friendly and helpful.

## Common problems

There are some mistakes often made by people starting up a business. These include:

- ◆ Not planning carefully enough.
- ◆ Not keeping to a business plan, or making changes to it without enough thought.
- ◆ Businesses which lose track of sales, credit, costs and planning run into many problems.
- ◆ Not planning for a rise in costs, and then not adding it onto the price of your goods.
- ◆ Not having cash to pay bills. Even a business which makes money can fail if it runs out of cash to pay bills. This problem can be avoided by planning how much cash you need to buy supplies and pay bills.
- ◆ Giving credit to customers who do not repay on time. Credit should rather not be given, or if so, only for small amounts.

◆ Not finding enough customers. You may need to change or improve the product, move to a new location, or do more advertising.

◆ Running out of goods. Customers will then go to the business down the street instead.

Starting a business takes courage, planning, start-up cash, and probably a bit of luck, too. If you're starting out, good luck! ☆

*Cindy Hermann is a Visions in Action visitor working with SPEAK.*

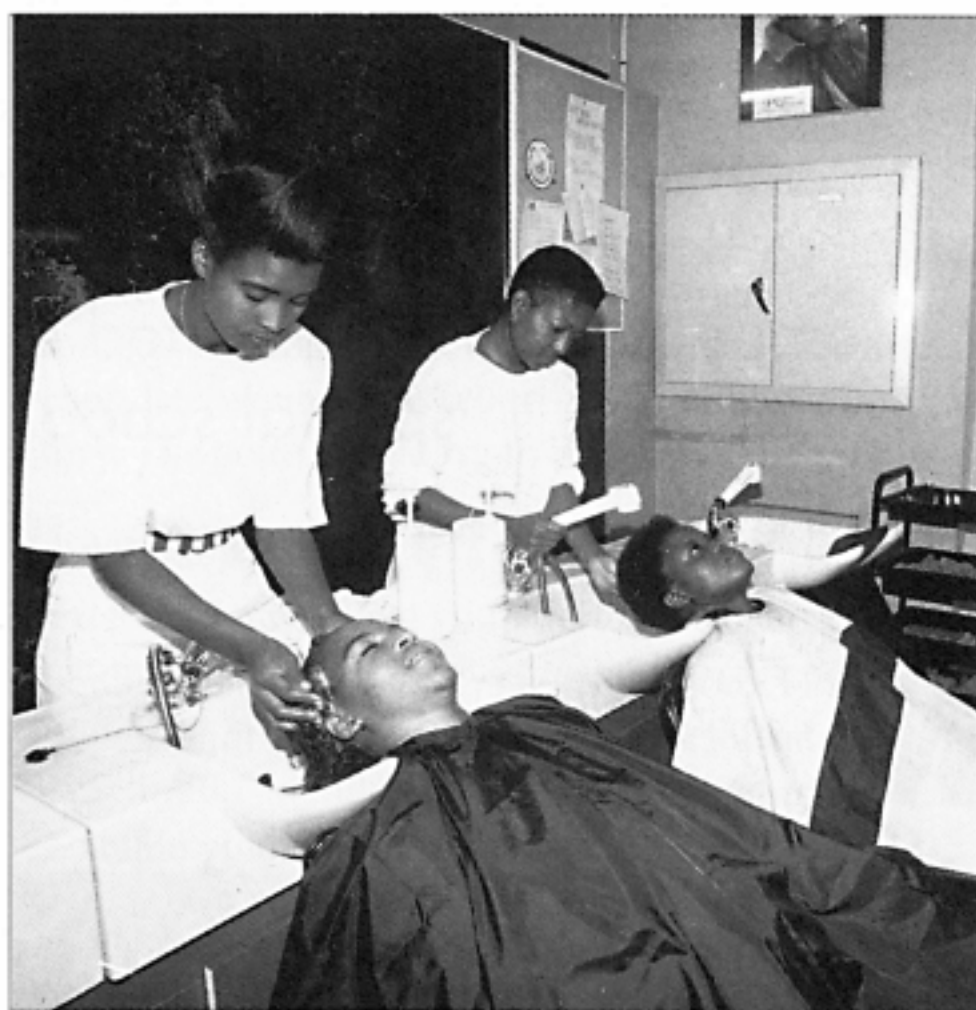


Photo: Southlight

## A good plan may help you to get credit for a business which needs equipment

These groups give business training and/or small loans. Some of them have offices in different provinces. You can phone or write to the head offices to get an address for them in your area:

### African Council of Hawkers and Informal Businesses

PO Box 4122  
Johannesburg 2000  
(011) 836-0005

### Self Employment Institute

PO Box 5223  
Helderberg  
Somerset West 7130  
(021) 905-3600

### Black Integrated Commercial Support Network

PO Box 1936  
Randburg 2125  
(011) 789-3141

### Small Business Advisory Bureau

PO Box 1880  
Potchefstroom 2520  
(0148) 991-002

### Get Ahead Foundation

PO Box 3776  
Pretoria 0001  
(012) 320-6530

### Women's Development Banking (for rural women)

PO Box 592  
Auckland Park 2006  
(011) 726-4230

### Small Business Development Corporation

PO Box 7780  
Johannesburg 2000  
(011) 643-7351

# Nora's victory

When Nora Lebotse discovered her young son's memory was "weak", she took action. Together with other women, she started a special school

**By Janet Small**

**N**ora Lebotse's 10-year-old son could not cope at his local school because he is "mildly retarded".

She discovered her son was not the only child suffering in this way in Hartebeesfontein, a rural township in the North West province.

Working with other women, Lebotse started Genesis Mental Health Services, which now runs a special school for such children. She told SPEAK all about it.

## **SPEAK: Why did you start Genesis Mental Health Services?**

**Lebotse:** My son kept failing Sub A. After three years, his teacher said he needed a special school. At first I didn't believe her and I decided to start teaching him at home.

I found his memory was very weak and I had to accept his teacher was right. I didn't want to send my child to a special school — the nearest is in Rustenburg, 55km away.

The teacher told me there were many children with disabilities worse than my son's. I thought we should start our own centre. With 15 other women from the Rural Women's Movement (RWM), we decided to tackle this.

## **SPEAK: How did you go about setting up the special school?**



Photo: Janet Small

**Lebotse:** In 1992, we visited other schools to see how many children had repeatedly failed. Then a team of us did a door-to-door survey to find out how many children were being kept at home. On the advice of the Transvaal Rural Action Committee (TRAC), we made contact with the Mental Health Society. In May 1992, I trained to teach mentally handicapped children.

Later that year, we opened our centre, with 30 children. There are three of us running it now. We have raised some money to pay small salaries. Parents help out on a voluntary basis. We got a donation to buy equipment, toys, a clock, a desk and chair. We also got a phone. I have a little office.

We would like to have different classes for different levels of disability, but we have no space.

Most of the women who started the project have dropped out because they were not committed to the

issues. They did not have retarded children.

**SPEAK: How do you feel about things now and in future?**

**Lebotse:** I feel better for my child now, and for the other children who were loitering around the township. At least they are well cared for.

The Mental Health Society sent a social worker to Hartebeesfontein. He is very energetic. He is planning to run a course for parents on how to stimulate their children during the holidays, so that they don't lose everything they get from school.

Women have told me they are impressed with what we have achieved. Maybe it can be an example. I think I should try and give other women's projects motivation. There were projects suggested – brick making, fence making, a creche and sewing. Most of these have collapsed. There was no follow-up by leadership and there were no funds. My project was different because I had my personal motivation.

**SPEAK: What do you think makes projects succeed?**

**Lebotse:** If you aim at a goal, and you have perseverance, you can reach it. Communication is essen-

tial, and women need basic training in problem solving.

**SPEAK: What other problems in your community should be tackled?**

**Lebotse:** There is a lot of abuse of women in our communities. It would be very good if we set up an office with women trained as counsellors. A letter could be sent to the accused man, calling him to the women's court. If he doesn't respond, they would call the police.

At the moment, police do not deal with family problems. They tell you to go to social workers. Sometimes the social workers try and visit abusive men, but they are usually very young women who cannot handle that type of situation.

The women's court, made up of women judges, would ask the accused questions based on his wife's report. He would be asked to give his side of the story. The court would try to help solve the problems.

They would say who is in the wrong and give advice on how to deal with marital problems. If the beatings carried on, the judges would advise the woman on steps she could take, like divorce or moving out, for example. ☆



Photo: Southlight

Like Nora's son, these Cape Town children need special care which Tembaletu School provides

Photo: Gibson Mendel



One way to fight the spread of HIV would be to reform the hostel system, which hurts men and women

# When families can't be together...

The migrant labour system forced husbands and wives apart. Now South Africa is counting the cost

**M**igrant labour in South Africa started over a century ago when the early settlers needed casual labour on farms and in mines. It is still a way of life for about 2.5 million men and women. From the beginning, the country's white rulers did not want black families settling down in 'white' towns and cities. So men left their families behind when they

went to work.

The effect on families is not hard to imagine: marriages fall apart, children grow up without a father and women become single parents. What has this to do with HIV and AIDS?

"Migrancy has played an important role in the spread of HIV," says Alan Whiteside, an AIDS researcher at Natal University. He believes the breakdown of families and com-

munities caused by men working as migrants is one of the main reasons South Africa has an AIDS crisis. There are about 566,000 HIV-positive South Africans.

Migrants spend months or years away from home. Life in the overcrowded hostels is lonely, and sex and drink often offers the easiest escape.

A 1993 survey of hostel dwellers showed they did not

know a lot about AIDS, and often practised unsafe sex.

It was also found that a significant number of hostel dwellers believed HIV could be passed through casual contact and that Western medicine had a cure.

Many have had frequent sex with more than one partner and some said they forgot about AIDS when drunk. One quarter of those who had once used condoms during sex had stopped doing so.

A 1990 study in KwaZulu/Natal found HIV infection among migrant males was as twice as high among those who stayed home.

People will often not talk about unfaithfulness and the use of condoms. Therefore, the virus can be easily passed between husbands and wives on visits home, as well as other partners either may have had.

**A**nother study found that nearly 10% of women in antenatal clinics in KwaZulu/Natal tested positive for HIV — twice as many as in the rest of the country.

“Migrancy and the habit of keeping rural homes is a reality in our society,” says Whiteside. “If people are forced to do it for 100 years, it becomes part of

their culture.”

But there is some hope. Last year an AIDS Agreement was signed between the Chamber of Mines and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). It protects workers from discrimination and from being screened for HIV without their knowledge. It also gives them the right to medical benefits if infected with AIDS.

This is the first step for NUM, which is also trying to change the forced separation of mineworkers from their families.

**J**udith Waymond of NUM says migrant workers should have the right to choose if they want to live alone in hostels, or have their families at the mines.

NUM wants companies to provide family housing, playgrounds and schools to make it possible for women and children to join the migrant workers. For men whose families do not join them, hostel conditions must be improved. They also demand private rooms so that wives are able to come and visit their husbands.

Experts agree this would help slow down the spread of HIV. ☺

*Adapted from an article by Sue Armstrong in WorldAIDS, September 1994*

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

**National office:** (011) 337 8539

**Eastern Transvaal:**

(01315) 41 181

**Northern Transvaal:**

(01521) 91 4221

**Southern Transvaal:**

(011) 337 7126

**Orange Free State:**

(057) 396 5509

**Natal:** (031) 301 2582

**Natal Midlands:** (0331) 45 0453

**Northern Natal:** (0354) 74 181

**Border:** (0431) 43 6733

**Eastern Cape:** (041) 41 1618

**Transkei:** (0471) 31 0757

**Western Cape:** (021) 696 4154

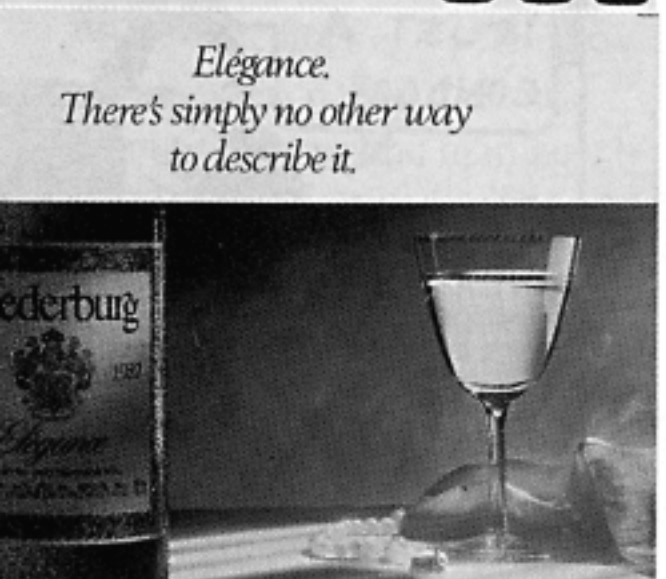
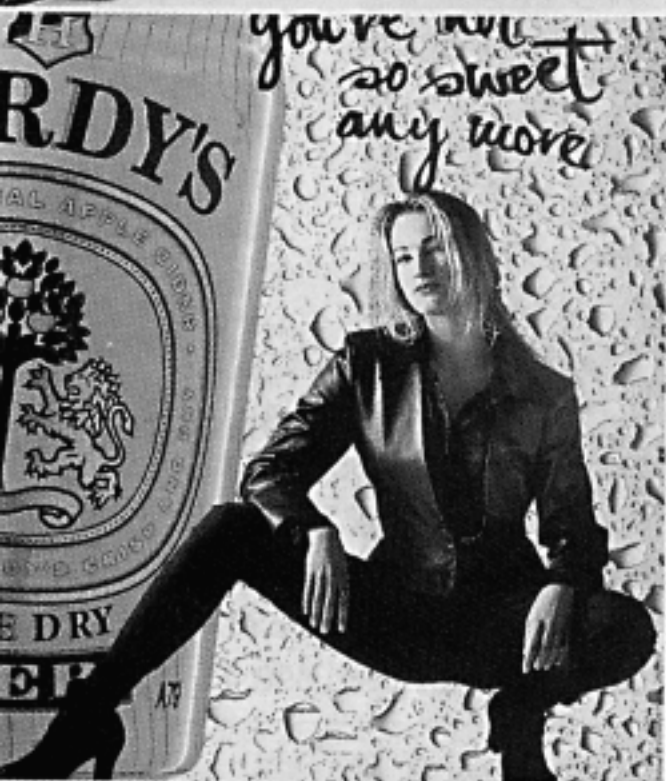


**These pages have been made possible by NPPHCN National AIDS Programme**



Graphic: Horizon, Zimbabwe

# A merry Xmas?



**By Cindy Hermann**

you have had three cans of beer, three glasses of wine or three shots of spirits, you should not try to drive.

## Alcohol is a dangerous drug

Road accidents are not the only problems caused by drinking. The South African Council on Alcoholism (SANCA) says alcohol abuse costs South Africa more than R5 billion every year in lost work, medical care, accidents, violence, crime and for the social programmes to help alcoholics and their victims.

Drinking too much can result in rape, violence, broken families and friendships, depression and child abuse. People who cannot stop drinking ("alcoholics") risk health problems such as brain damage, heart and muscle disease, stomach ulcers and liver cancer.

Despite these dangers, SANCA estimates that just under half of South African women and more than two-thirds of South African men drink alcohol regularly. SANCA also believes that the real number of alcoholics is much higher than the official figure of one million.

How drunk a person gets depends on their weight, how fast they drink, what they are drinking, how much they have eaten and their mood.

## Women and alcohol

Women can get drunk on less

**T**hembi and Salamina were at a Christmas party at their friend's house. There was music and dancing, good food, and everyone was drinking. They danced for a while, then sat in the lounge, sipping beer and talking to each other. But it was getting very late and they wanted to go home. It was too late for public transport. Then a man offered to drive them. He was not sober, but they needed the lift.

Thembi and Salamina never reached home. The car they were riding in crashed. They were killed.

## How many more people will be killed this Christmas?

Drinking and driving is a big problem in South Africa. Every year, thousands of people are killed or injured in road accidents. In 1991, about 30 000 people were arrested for drinking and driving. And at least 10 percent of all road accidents are caused by drunk drivers. But because alcohol is an accepted part of most people's lives, it is easy to forget it is a dangerous drug.

Alcohol is what doctors call a "depressant." This means that in small amounts it can make you feel nice and relaxed — but also less alert and slower to react. This can be extremely dangerous for a driver. Even quite small amounts of alcohol can have this effect. Some drivers say that they drive better when drunk - but this is only the effect of the alcohol making them more relaxed and overconfident. You should never drive when you are drunk. But even if



Photo: Southlight



**Drinking with friends can be fun – but one of you should stay sober**

alcohol than men, because their bodies contain less water and more fat. The alcohol builds up quicker, stays in their bodies longer and can cause more damage. Women will also get drunk quicker two weeks before their period because of hormonal changes in their bodies. So will women on birth control pills. If a woman is pregnant, alcohol can damage her unborn child. And some researchers say women who drink regularly are more likely to get breast cancer.

Because women usually drink less than men, advertisers are now

working harder to get women to drink. Adverts now tell women they are more sophisticated and desirable with a drink in their hands. Liquor companies are inventing drinks with sweet and different tastes to appeal to women. In 1991 alone, liquor companies spent R114 million on advertising alcohol. But the facts suggest we should think before we drink.

### **How much is too much? (SANCA guidelines)**

A "unit" is one can of beer, one

glass of wine or one tot of spirits.

Women who drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week (around two drinks a day) risk their health. Women who drink more than 35 units a week (around five drinks a day) can develop physical and emotional problems. Pregnant women should not drink at all.

Men who drink more than 21 units per week (three drinks a day) are in danger of ill health. Men who take more than five drinks a day are at serious risk. ☛

## **At the party ...**

### **If you are a guest:**

- ◆ Don't let yourself be pressured into drinking if you don't want to.
- ◆ Eat something before or while you drink. This slows down the effects of alcohol in your body. So does sipping your drinks slowly.
- ◆ Drinking coffee or water, or taking a cold shower will not sober you up. You must wait for the alcohol to leave your body.
- ◆ A good rule is to wait at least one hour after your last drink before you drive.
- ◆ Agree with friends before the party that at least one of you will stay sober that night and drive (or walk!) the others home.

- ◆ Don't drink to relieve stress or boredom or to change your mood. This does not make the problem go away and can lead to becoming addicted to alcohol.

### **If you are giving the party:**

- ◆ Put out the drinks at certain times in the evening to keep people from drinking all the time.
- ◆ Make sure everyone eats before they start drinking. Sometimes serving punch with only a little alcohol in it will keep people from drinking too much.
- ◆ Make sure there are also soft drinks available so guests have a choice.
- ◆ A lively party with good music and other activities like videos may stop people from drinking too much.
- ◆ Have the telephone number of a taxi service available, so you can arrange rides home for people who are too drunk to drive.

# The jab that hurts the pocket

A new immunisation prevents children dying from a certain kind of 'flu. But most people cannot afford it. *Cindy Hermann reports*

**H** *aemophilus influenza b* (Hib), is a bacterial infection which strikes thousands of children in South Africa every year.

It can be very serious, even causing death. The good news is it can be prevented, through immunisation.

The bad news is most people cannot afford it.

One out of every 250 children under the age of five in South Africa gets Hib. Hib is dangerous because it is very difficult to detect, and it develops quickly.

Hib is spread from child to child, just like a cold and cough. The most serious cases of Hib happen to children under two. By the age of five, most children are unlikely to get the disease.

Hib causes illnesses which can kill children. These include pneumonia, septicaemia (blood poisoning), and epiglottitis (swelling of



Photo: Africa South and East

**It is every mother's dream to have healthy children. But outside Johannesburg the Hib vaccine costs more than most can afford**

the throat). It can also cause painful infections of joints and bones. Hib is the most common cause of meningitis, which is the swelling of the lining of the brain. Meningitis can cause death or permanent brain damage.

All children under five should be immunised. Babies are immunised at three months, four-and-a-half months and six months old. A fourth injection is given to the child between 15 and 18 months.

Children older than six months who have not been immunised can however, also be given the course of three injections. When the child is older than 18 months, she or he is given a single injection.

The Hib immunisation is very effective. Immunising your child is expensive. Each injection costs between R65 at clinics, and R120 at private doctors. People with medical aid will pay between R40 and R65, depending on how much

they earn.

Many people will not be able to protect their children from Hib. In Johannesburg, the city council has a One-for-One programme for children from families who earn less than R2 500 a month.

One-for-one involves over 100 medical aid schemes. For every child on medical aid who gets immunised, another child will get one free. The immunisations are available at community health clinics in Johannesburg.

Unfortunately, One-for-One is only for people living in Johannesburg. Other cities may soon join in if medical aid companies and municipalities agree.

It does not seem fair however, that children have to rely on charity when health should be their right. Shouldn't Hib immunisation be part of the new government's plan for free health care for children under six? ☛

# The Sacrifice

continued from page 14

quickly and the directors seemed to be impressed by him. But soon, the kind of life Gwinyai expected them to lead started to strain their marriage.

"Gwinyai, are you going out again?"

"You know how it is, sweetheart. This very important person is having a party and we're expected to be there."

"And what about the very important people around here? Like your wife and children?" Tecla was getting angry now.

"Tecla, I'm doing this for you and the children. I want you to have all the comforts I didn't have."

"Right now, I'm longing for the comfort of my husband's attention and of sharing some of my thoughts with him. I want my best friend back — the one I married!"

Then she had just broken down. Gwinyai had comforted her. But in the end, he still trotted off to his boss and the important people.

**A**fter that he started taking her with him. He told her to "doll herself up" a little. She had agreed because she cared for him. There had been visits to the hairdressers, boutiques, everything. She was certainly different. But Tecla could not say whether the change was better or not. Anyway, Gwinyai seemed to be pleased.

She hadn't the heart to tell him that something was missing. It just wasn't her style. Of course she wanted to live comfortably, but not at the expense of her family life. She had given up a lot for this family. Gwinyai could not



understand that it was him she wanted, not the gifts he could afford to give her. He had changed so much — or maybe this was the real him coming out? After all, courtship and marriage were quite different.

Tecla wondered if he was trying to prove to her family that he was "making it" and could provide for their daughter. If that was the case, Tecla thought, he does not know the real me. I married him to rebel against their idea of my "perfect partner." Now Gwinyai's money had made him more acceptable. He showered her family with gifts and they talked proudly about their "successful" son-in-law.

Tecla felt sick at the thought of the whole thing. It was dishonest.

It was living a big lie. She went into the bedroom, her feet sinking into the thick carpet. She was certainly better off than many women she knew — or was she? They feared other women. Her rival was her husband's job. Which was worse?

She could not even convince herself that she enjoyed being a housewife and mother. She knew without doubt that she had been created for more than that. She felt imprisoned in the bars of her original choice. Her feelings were threatening to explode. There was no choice that would not hurt herself, her husband, or her children.

When Gwinyai finally came home, his face was glowing.

**"T**ecla my love, I know my news will please you!" She looked hard at him. He gripped her by the shoulders. "Tecla! This is the biggest break of my career. It will mean so much...just imagine!... Tecla? You aren't listening!"

She threw off his hands and stepped back.

"Gwinyai, enough! Enough, stop it, please! You have no idea what I am going through. I've had it up to here with you and your job!"

Gwinyai did not know what had hit him.

Tecla went on: "It's over. I've had enough. I can't continue being a thing shaped by you and your job." She marched to the cupboard, hauled suitcases down and pulled dresses from hangers. Her energy amazed Gwinyai. But the energy came from her anger.

Gwinyai watched her, failing to respond. His face was a picture of puzzlement. ☹

*A longer version of this story originally appeared in August 1993 in the Zimbabwe magazine "Horizon".*

# As a matter of fact...



October's Gay Pride march in Johannesburg was an occasion to come out and celebrate



## More children abused

Child abuse is on the rise in South Africa. In the first six months of 1994 there were 13 000 cases reported, compared to 16 000 reported in all of 1993. A member of the South African Police Services says he believes that unemployment causes child abuse, because people who are bored start abusing children as a form of entertainment.

## We want property not meat

In Zimbabwe some government MP's are warning women that they are making men angry by pushing for equality and property rights. The late MP Sydney Malunga said that women should give up their fight and be content to live in a traditional culture where they are respected. As proof that women are more respected in traditional culture, he points out that "when a beast is slaughtered, the women have the most tender meat while the men have to make do with trotters." Zimbabwean women are saying that tender bits of meat just aren't good enough.

## Violence breeds violence

A recent report shows domestic violence in military families is a growing problem in the United States. One woman or child dies each week at the hands of a family member in the military. In 1993, 37 children died as a result of abuse by military men.

## HEALTH BRIEFS

### Better health care needed

Every year thousands of Tanzanian women die giving birth due to poor health conditions and lack of equipment in hospitals and clinics. The World Health Organization estimates that 400 women die for every 100 000 live births in Tanzania. However, in 1991 one clinic in Dar es Salaam counted as many as 745 deaths for every 100 000 live births.

### Cancer is killing

Twenty-five percent of cancer deaths among black women in South Africa are due to cervical cancer. Overall, cervical cancer is the most common cause of death from cancer among women in South Africa.

Breast cancer is the number one cause of cancer deaths in white women. If discovered early enough, both cancers can usually be cured.

### Plague in Mozambique

An outbreak of bubonic plague in Mozambique has left several people dead and many more very ill. Humans catch the disease through flea bites or from those who are infected. The symptoms are headaches, chills, fever, aches and pains and weakness. The last known case of bubonic plague in South Africa was in 1982.

# TAXI TALK

## Big and proud

The insults that are thrown at overweight people should stop, says *June Madingwane*

If you are overweight, you face daily criticism because of your size.

In taxis, the queue marshalls complain because they can only fit three people, not four on a minibus seat. So they tell you to go on a diet.

Dieting might sound easy, but few people understand what is involved in reducing weight. Some women gain weight after becoming mothers, and it's difficult to shed those kilos. Others inherit their size and shape. The fat stays, despite efforts to remove it.

Most people think a person gets fat from eating too much. This isn't always true. There are slender people who eat a lot, yet they remain slim.

It's these slender people who make it as television actors or feature on adverts. On TV and in movies the only time you see fat people is when they are used to make people laugh.

Magazines also do their best to humiliate fat people. They are filled with adverts for slimming products. What makes it worse is that such adverts feature "perfectly" slim models. These models have never been overweight

— but the adverts give overweight people the idea they can become just as slim.

Some men make fools of fat women. They call out "sdudla" (which means a fat person) when a big woman passes by. These remarks are common among mineworkers and in compounds. Others make funny comments like: "Fat women are good for winter, but are the worst sleeping partners in summer."

Young men prefer slender women to those overweight. Some husbands even leave their wives for younger and slimmer partners.

How are big women supposed to feel? Why can't men love the women they were attracted to, without passing rude remarks?

There doesn't seem to be anywhere where fat people fit in. A lot of companies have slender receptionists. You wonder if overweight people are ever considered for such jobs.

Clothing shops also seem to have something against us. They always stock beautiful styles for slim sizes, but from size 40 upwards, their garments are a disgrace.

Those strange dresses look like sacks. Some shops don't stock larger sizes at all, and the few which do charge very high prices.

When there are bigger beautiful dresses, they are always more expensive.

Dressmakers have the same attitude towards fat people.

For you to get a good outfit which suits you, you pay double the price. It's as if it is only OK to be fat if you are rich.

It's about time fat people were accepted in society and not treated as if they were suffering from some infectious disease! ✪



# NOTICES

## ● Conference on Creativity ●

The Gender Studies Programme at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, is hosting a conference about the creative concerns of South African women artists, writers and performers.

Women from all over the country will come together to discuss their own and other women's ways of being creative through visual and performing arts and writing.

The conference will be held from January 26-28, 1995. For more details call Ms H de Villiers at (0331) 260-5562

## Self-Employed Women's Union

Women homeworkers and street traders recently formed the Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU).

For more information contact them at:

Office 7

City Market Shopping Complex,  
Warwick Avenue, Durban 4001,  
(031) 304-3042

## ● New books ●

The Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, has produced 33 easy reading books for adults. The books are fiction and non-fiction. They cover all reading levels from basic beginners to Std. 5, in both English and Zulu.

To find out more, write to:  
The New Readers Project  
Centre for Adult Education  
University of Natal,  
Durban 4001

## ● Know your rights ●

The Southern African Association of Early Childhood Educare (SAAECE) gives information about early educare, children's and parent's rights, and how to get in touch with educare centres in your area. Their address is:

Early Childhood Educare  
PO Box 673  
Pretoria 0001  
(012) 322-0601

## ● The words of God ●

A group of Christians concerned about sexism in churches has published a pamphlet called "Do our words hide the truth about God?" It looks at how the language used in church often excludes women, and other ways in which Christian churches are not sensitive to the needs of women.

If you would like a copy or more information, write:

The Women's Desk  
South African Council of Churches  
Box 4921  
Johannesburg 2000  
(011) 492-1448

# 1995

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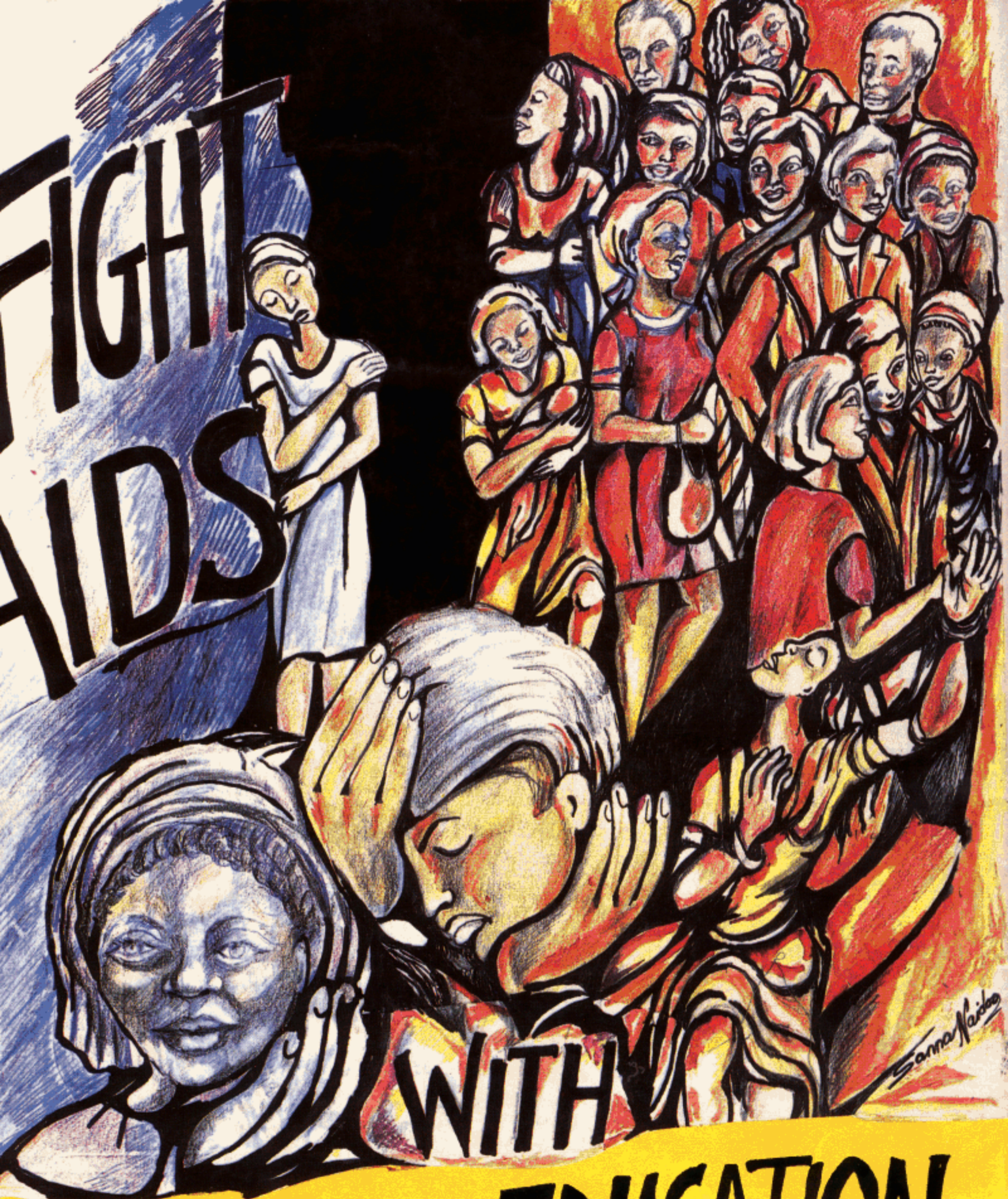
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