

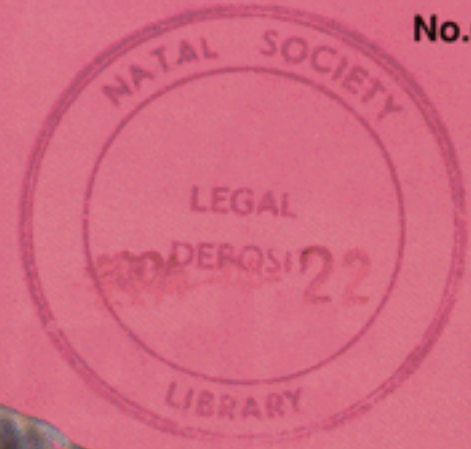
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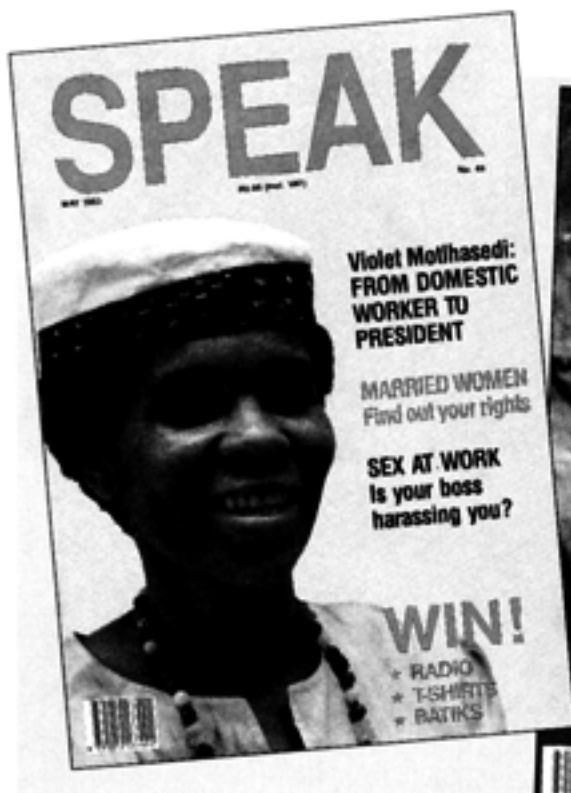


JOYCE SEROKE

A nineties role model



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COVER PHOTO:

Elmond Jiyane

COMMENT

April and May are going to be busy months for South Africa. The entire country is preparing for our first democratic elections to be held on 26, 27 and 28 April 1994. We will finally see the end of an era of apartheid, oppression, destruction and brutality.

In the last few weeks running up to the elections, political parties are going to be making more promises only because they want your vote. Some might even offer to give you money, pay your rent or take you to the polling stations. They are just trying to win your favour. Don't let them. Vote for the party you feel has your interest at heart.

At the negotiations, political parties agreed that there will be two ballots. This means you will vote twice — first for the party you want for the national government and then for the provincial government. You can vote twice for the same party. In this issue of SPEAK, we explain this further.

We also bring good news from the Women's National Coalition which has launched the Women's Charter. The charter will be presented to the new government in June this year. We expect the new government to respond favourably to the charter.

As women, we would have liked to see more parties put women's issues higher on their agendas. We should make sure that those who have, will keep their promises. We will certainly keep an eye on them.

Talk Back

Free political prisoners

I am a 20-year-old student doing Standard 10 at Ramphelane High School. I am concerned with the number of political prisoners who are still behind bars. As black South Africans, we must fight for their freedom. The government must meet this demand. All political prisoners who are still in jail should be released now.

Activists who were detained and charged during the state of emergency in 1986 must all be released.

The regime's attempt to link their release with pardons for the apartheid murderers must be rejected with the contempt it deserves.

It is our action which will bring about free political activity. It is our collective effort which will end apartheid.

Phambili SPEAK!

*David Nkadimeng
Burgersfort*

We support your call for the release of all political prisoners. — Editor

We need farmers

I am a regular reader of SPEAK and appreciate the advice you give to your readers.

I would like your magazine to encourage readers, especially the youth, to seriously

**Thanks to all our readers who have written in. Please keep your letters flowing. We are often forced to shorten letters because of space. Send your letters to:
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South Africa**

consider going into agriculture as it is an important part of the economy.

Now that many white farmers have left and still plan to leave South Africa, who is going to produce the food which feeds the nation? It is our duty to go back to the land and continue from where these farmers left off.

*Matome Jack Moseamedi
Tzaneen*

We want to see the new government return to its rightful owners the land stolen from people by the white government. We also hope the new government will have projects where people, especially women living in rural areas, will be taught about agriculture. We also hope to see more students studying

agriculture at universities and technikons. — Editor

Thank you Nomboniso

I was really inspired by Nomboniso Gasa's tribute to Thenjiwe Mthintso in your December issue of SPEAK.

Thenjiwe's decision to defend her choice to live with her late partner, Skenjana Roji, at his funeral service, was a show of great courage.

I was at his funeral in Zwenyoka, Ciskei, where she gave a similarly powerful address, facing gender issues straight on. Your reflection showed so much of your own humanity.

I have read the article over and over again and it has so many strengthening messages and challenges.

Thank you SPEAK for sharing Thenjiwe's experience with us.

Viva Nomboniso Gasa.

*Su Groves
Kei Road*

Thank you for your letter. We hope this article has made people more accepting of people who choose not to marry. — Editor

Voter education is appreciated

I am writing this letter to draw your attention on the voter education article in your February issue.

I was impressed by your comic strip entitled, "Our Time To Vote". I read it thoroughly but was disappointed when I realised that the comic was incomplete.

I don't blame you, but

instead suggest that this story be finished. It is easy to understand and many people will learn a lot from it compared to other methods used to teach people about voting.

I hope my suggestion will be considered.

*L Segokodi
Mothotlung*

The voter education strip you refer to ran over three issues — February, March and April. Perhaps you did not get the following issue because if you go through the three issues, you will notice that the story is complete. — Editor

I want be a journalist

I am very interested in journalism but I don't know what to do to become one.

I completed Standard 10 last year but my results were not good enough for me to go to university. Please tell me where I can go for help.

*Lerroy Kopano Modiselle
Warmbaths*

Most major newspapers like The Star, Sowetan and Weekly Mail have cadet training programmes for aspiring journalists. Get in touch with them — they might be able to take you on as a trainee journalist. — Editor

I'll never buy SPEAK again

I have been a regular reader of SPEAK for a while now. But until you print an apology for printing Bob Mabena's hateful

response to the question of his views on "homosexuality and lesbianism" and promise not to print such hateful comments again, I will never buy another issue of SPEAK.

*Donna Cohen
Botswana*

We cannot apologise for the views other people hold. We also do not expect all the people that we interview in SPEAK to agree with our principles.

We agree with you that what he said was hateful and intolerant. We clearly support the rights of homosexuals and lesbians, and challenge the hypocrisy of people like Bob Mabena. We however apologise for printing it in SPEAK. — Editor

Can't get an I.D

I lost my birth certificate a while ago and am unable to get my ID with my church certificate. I want to vote in the elections. Please help me.

*J. Mahlangu
Holmdene*

On page 14 of this issue is an article that may help you. Read the article and good luck!

A WINNER!

The lucky winner of the Matla Trust Voter Education radio competition is Nana D Moeketsi. Congratulations!

Sir David Owen
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SPEAK



Joyce Seroke

Joyce Seroke has been with the YWCA for nearly 30 years, working in community-based women's projects

Women builder

Throughout the world, women have played a major role in developing their communities. They have influenced and directed many projects, not for charity, but as a way of giving women the chance to have control over their lives. Joyce Notemba Seroke of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), is one such woman

At 61, YWCA leader Joyce Seroke is as active as ever. And she is a role model for women in many communities.

A friend who has worked with her for more than 10 years explains why: "She is strong, hard working, understands people and is not selfish. Joyce is a champion of women's rights."

By Rosalee Telela

Seroke was the first South African woman to be appointed to the executive committee of the YWCA's world body. At present, she is the national general secretary of the YWCA in South Africa.

Seroke's first contact with the organisation was not quite love at first sight: "My mother was one of the founding



Joyce Seroke (centre) at one of the YWCA's rural projects

Photo compliments Joyce Seroke

members in the Transvaal. They used to hold meetings in their homes and we had to bake cakes and clean their houses. This was something we did not want to do but we did not have a choice.”

Seroke grew to appreciate and admire the work of the YWCA and later joined the organisation.

She grew up in the heart of Crown Mines, in Johannesburg. Her family life was different from others living on the mines.

“My father was an assistant manager. We were privileged because we had a house and could live as a family. The other miners lived in single-sex hostels with their families living somewhere else,” remembers Seroke.

She officially joined the YWCA when she went to study at the University of Fort Hare. Later, she went overseas

to study further.

“When I returned from studying in London in 1965, I started working for the YWCA in Durban as their projects officer.”

Seroke worked mainly with women living in the rural areas of Northern Natal. She helped women start and run projects in the community.

“One of our biggest mistakes was not asking people what their needs were and what they wanted. After a few years, our projects failed because the women felt their needs were not being met. We were so desperate to help,” she explains.

Seroke says the YWCA has learnt a lot from such experiences.

“We do not want to be a charity organisation. We want to empower people to do things for themselves. We say, ‘come and learn skills so you can find

better ways of living’,” she says.

Today, the organisation’s main focus is on women and development. Seroke explains: “This development is about people and what their needs are. It is the people themselves who are engaged in making projects that meet their needs.

“In the rural areas, we work mainly with women whose husbands work in the cities. We train them to run projects of their choice, such as small-scale farming, piggery, poultry farming and so on.”

Primary health care is also part of the YWCA’s work. “When we talk about primary health care, it is not just about setting up clinics, but also about literacy, housing and land — things which will empower people to run their lives,” Seroke says.

The organisation has been

“We are not out there to change the world. We are out there to change the position of women.”

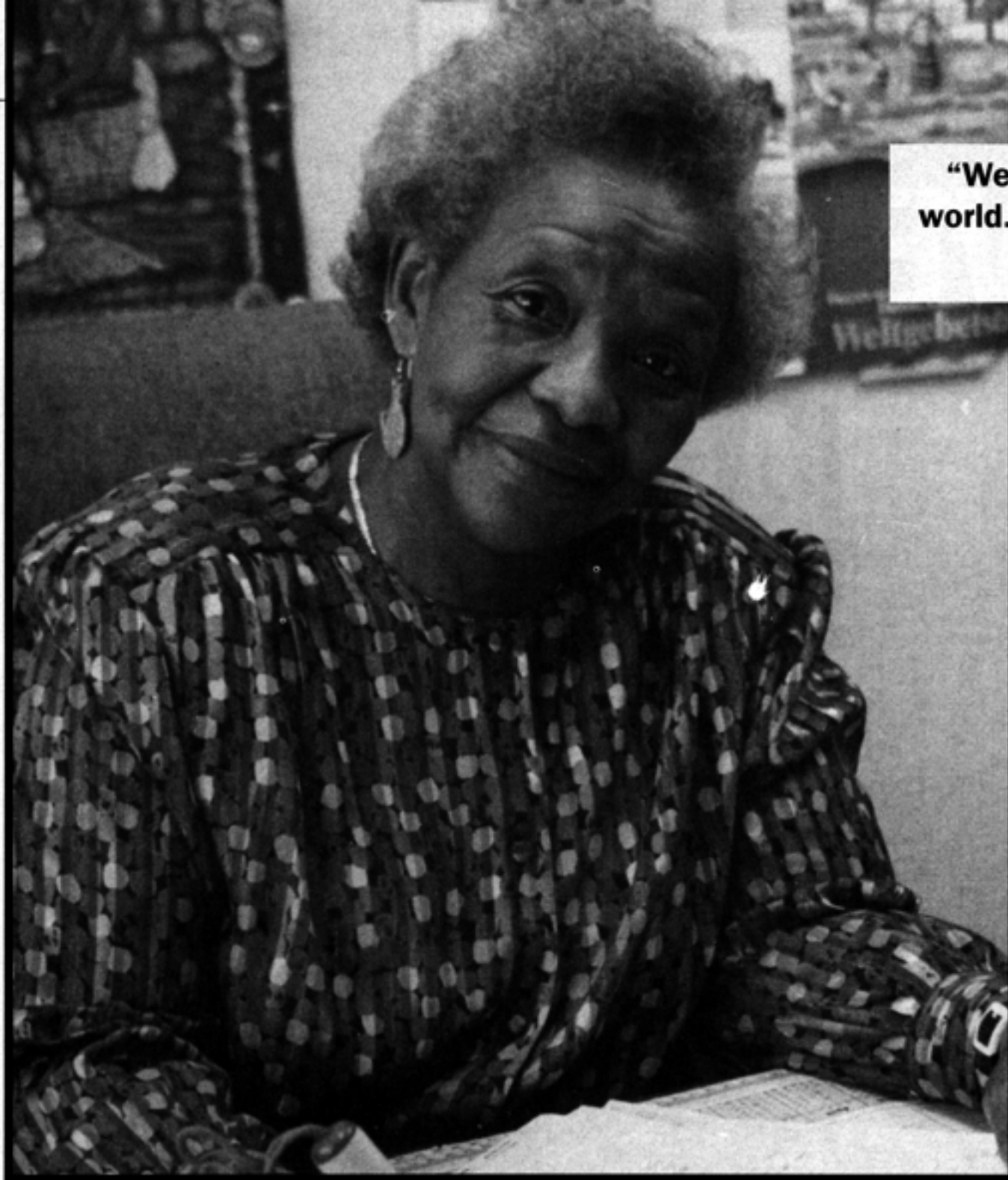


Photo: Elmond Jiyane

working with women since 1952, when branches in Sophiatown, Port Elizabeth and Durban came together to form the South African YWCA. Today the YWCA operates in eight regions in the country.

“We are not out there to change the world. We are out there to change the position of women,” says Seroke.

The YWCA has been involved in voter education for the last few months.

“We don’t just teach women how to put the cross, we talk about democracy and tolerance as part of our programmes. We explain that it is their right to choose the party they support and what the vote can do for them,” she explains.

“We say to them it is not enough just to vote. As women, we must ask the political par-

ties we support how they are going to address our issues if we vote them into power,” adds Seroke.

According to research done by Matla Trust, the majority of rural women are likely to face many problems during the elections. These range from not having the right documents, to spoiled votes.

Seroke says the attitude of traditional leaders could also prevent rural women from voting. They believe women should not play a role in politics.

“Chiefs say women want to take over the responsibility and positions of men. They make it difficult to run voter education for women in their areas.

“They don’t realise that women have already taken the

responsibilities which are ‘traditionally’ male. Women have to feed and clothe the children with money they earn. Most of the time men are away working on the mines and towns and do not send money home to their families.”

As a member of the National Women’s Coalition, the YWCA was involved in drawing up the Women’s Charter.

“The charter is going to be a good tool for all women. It must be used to put women’s issues in the constitution and in society. It will help raise awareness of women’s position and women’s issues,” says Seroke.

The YWCA turns 100 on October 20 1994 and is planning a big celebration. “We will celebrate, honour and recognise the achievements and contributions of women in the movement. We will also plan our programme of action — things we hope to achieve in the future.”

Seroke and the YWCA have come a long way in contributing to the upliftment of women.

Some might say that, at her age, she should begin to slow down. But Seroke is a living example of the YWCA’s slogan, “women remain young at heart”.

“I’m a concerned woman and believe that, with all the skills and knowledge I have, I should try to give it to other women so they can become more confident and assertive.” ❁

**“ I HAVE PRAYED.
I HAVE LAUGHED.
I HAVE SUNG.
AND I HAVE CRIED.
BUT UNTIL NOW I HAVE
NOT HAD A VOICE.”**

**For decades, women in this country have been treated like children. Seen and not heard.
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Now is the time for women to be heard.



WOMANDLA!

Power to women? At least the Women's Charter gives women a fighting chance

"As women and citizens of South Africa, we are here to claim our rights. We want recognition and respect for the work we do in the home, in the workplace and in the community. We want full participation in the creation of a non-sexist, non-racist democratic society." These were the words of Frene Ginwala, who opened the launch of the South African Women's Charter.

In February this year, 300 representatives from 92 women's groups around the country adopted the charter at the World Trade Centre.

When the campaign to draw up the Women's Charter was launched two years ago, women said: "Despite our political differences, we must unite to force open the doors of male domination. We must make sure women's rights are included in the laws and constitution of the 'new' South Africa."

Polygamy, abortion, maternity rights, lobola and land ownership were some of the issues discussed and, of course, debated. Some delegates questioned whether the WNC would ever achieve its goals.

But after they had argued, agreed and disagreed, at the end of the conference, all the women joined hands to sing "Igama Lama Kosikazi,

When the Women's National Coalition (WNC) was formed two years ago, many questioned whether this broad alliance could pull off something as big as drawing up a women's charter representing the views of the majority of women in South Africa. Rosalee Telela went to the launch of the Women's Charter in February

Malibongwe", which means the woman's word should be praised.

Over a two-year period, the WNC went to women in rural and urban communities, factories, shops, women's meetings and many other places where women are found. Their demands, wishes, fears, desires and ideas were collected, discussed and debated and finally, put into a single document. The end result was the Women's Charter.

"Women want to control their lives. We bear important

responsibilities but lack the authority to make decisions in the home and society.

"We want shared responsibility and decision-making in the home and effective equality in politics, the law, and in the economy. For too long women have been marginalised, ignored, exploited and are the poorest and most disadvantaged of South Africa," states the charter.

"If democracy and human rights are to be meaningful for women, they must address our historic subordination and oppression. Women must participate in and shape the nature and form of our democracy."

On the economy, the charter speaks about poor working conditions and low pay for women. It calls on the state and private companies to provide equal opportunities and equal work for equal pay for women, especially disabled women.

This, the charter argues, can be achieved through effective affirmative action programmes.

"There should be no discriminatory taxation. All dependents supported by women breadwinners should be recognised for tax deductions," argues the charter.

It further states that women's unpaid labour (cooking, cleaning, looking after the

**"We want shared responsibility and decision-making in the home and effective equality in politics, the law, and in the economy."
- Womens Charter**



PHOTO: SPEAK

children) should be recognised as contributing to the national wealth and should be included in the national accounts of the country's economy.

On family life and partnerships, the charter says women shall have equality within the family and within marriages and intimate relationships.

It goes on to say that

"women married under customary law shall have the right to inherit from their husbands".

The charter also calls for easily available cheap shelters and counselling services for survivors of rape, battery and sexual assault.

It says women must have the right to have control over their bodies. This includes the

right to choose to have an abortion or not.

The charter calls on the media to change its image of women as sex objects and housewives, and to reflect women's contribution in all areas of public and private life.

Although the charter clearly states women's demands covering all aspects of life, it does have its shortcomings. The way the charter is written makes it difficult to understand if one is not familiar with such documents or terms.

Some of the issues such as polygamy, lesbianism and lobola are not dealt with in depth.

Nevertheless, it is still a victory that women from different political organisations were able to draw up a Women's Charter that might become part of the country's legislation.

The charter will be presented to the Constituent Assembly in June to influence the new constitution and the Bill of Rights.

The charter a voice of the common experiences, visions and aspirations of South African women.

"We are breaking our silence. We call for respect and recognition of our human dignity and for a genuine change in our status and material conditions in a future South Africa," ends the charter. ★

Libraries belong to you

May 16 to 21 is Library Week. Programmes in this week will try to popularise libraries in the community and show that they are not just buildings full of books. They belong to and should be used by the people. Librarian Patience Maisela chats to Rosalee Telela

For too long, libraries have been seen as places where only students and those who are educated go. Library Week, May 16-21, is a time to change this view and to open up libraries to communities.

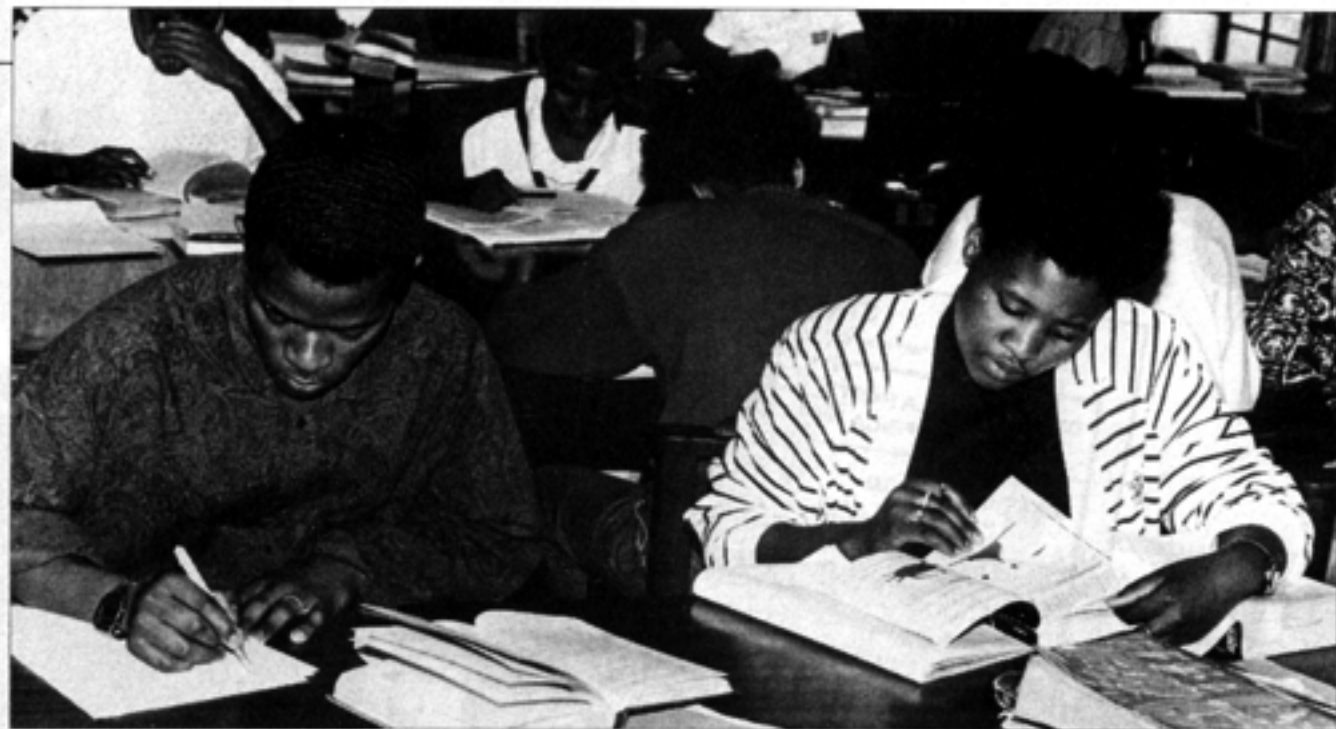
Patience Maisela, a librarian from Soweto, promises that her library and others around the country are organising all kinds of exciting events and programmes for the week.

"We are going to take the library out of the building and into the community. We are planning events such as story telling, puppet shows, drama and talks by writers," she explains.

"We are trying to show that libraries are not only for students and people who have had formal education. Libraries



Photos: Elmond Jiyane



Libraries are not just for students and people with formal education – they belong to the whole community

belong to you — whether you are a worker, parent, youth or professional.”

In the 15 years that Maisela has been a librarian, she has come to understand what libraries are all about.

She started as a general librarian, working with the public. Now she holds a managerial position as the Soweto City Council's senior librarian.

Maisela's job involves coordinating Soweto's six public libraries in Orlando, Klipspruit, Pimville, Mofolo, Phiri and Chiawelo.

“Six public libraries in Soweto for 2,5 million people is not enough,” says Maisela.

There are also a few community libraries and resource centres which are not state funded. But there is a great need for more state resources to be put into public libraries.

The Translis Coalition, an organisation of major South African library and information service associations, is trying to do something about this. A Translis discussion document says: “Large sections of the South African population have been disadvantaged by

the lack of information services. The present services does not cater properly for the needs of the majority of people. Public libraries are mainly found in the white urban and business areas.”

Maisela says libraries can play an important role in the community. “The traditional role of public libraries is to provide information on education, culture and recreation. Because of the breakdown in the education system and the fact that many children are not learning, libraries need to do much more.

“I know from my own experience as a student, I used to read only what the teacher told me to read. By the time I finished my schooling, I had learnt only half of what I could have learned,” she says.

Library opening and closing times (in Soweto from 9am-6pm) make it difficult for many people to use them.

“People who are working and studying at the same time therefore cannot use our libraries. But we cannot work any later as it is too dangerous, especially because most librarians are women.”

The Translis document also

argues that library and information systems should apply the principles of non-racism and non-sexism.

“Most of the people in managerial positions in library work are male, yet the majority of librarians are women.”

Maisela says women themselves are partly to blame: “We are the ones who hand over power to men by electing them into high positions.”

She says she would like to see more women visiting libraries. “We have to make information more available to women. We have to make books and magazines on women's issues popular.”

To make libraries more popular, residents' attitude towards them also needs to change.

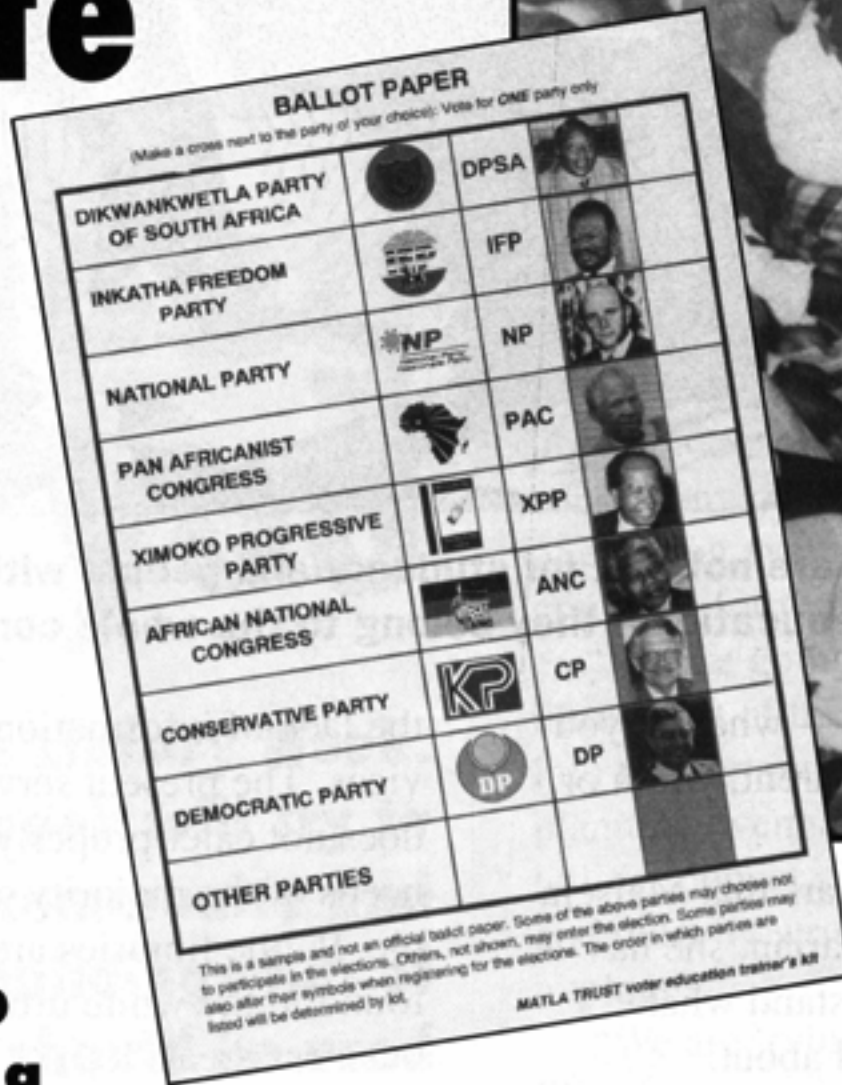
“This could be done through training and libraries marketing themselves in an attractive way to the community,” says Maisela.

“The use of media resources should be part of the teaching curriculum. Learner teachers should be encouraged to use libraries as a form of instruction so that, when they teach, they encourage their students to use libraries,” she argues.

“Libraries need to reach out to the community. They need to train their staff to find out what the community's needs are. Then it will become a community library as every library should be.”

While Maisela and other librarians prepare to inform, entertain and encourage you to use libraries, it is also your duty to get involved. Join a library and experience the wonder of books. ☪

You can vote with a Temporary Voter's Card



A sample of a ballot paper

If you don't have a valid ID document, you can still get a voter's card

South Africa's first democratic election is just two weeks away. The excitement and tension is no doubt reaching its peak, especially among those of us who will be voting for the first time. Hopefully, by now, all voters have valid identity documents, without which you cannot vote. If you have been issued a temporary identity document (ID), you will still not be able to vote.

However, if you have not yet received your ID, do not give up. You will still be able to vote if you have a TEMPORARY VOTER'S CARD.

How the voter's card works

A voter's card is a temporary document issued only for the purpose of voting. Similar to an ID, your voter's card will serve as identification when you cast your vote on 27 April. All you have to do is to produce your voter's card at any polling station in the country and this will enable you to vote freely.

Where you can get a voter's card

At present, voter's cards can be obtained from your nearest Home Affairs office. But, as the election date draws closer, voter's cards will become easily obtainable in residential areas, for example, from community centres, schools and churches. All voters will have to watch the media (newspapers, television and radio) closely in order to find out where they can obtain a voter's card.

According to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), there will be permanent and mobile stations where you will be able to obtain your voter's card.

Obtaining your voter's card will be a quick and easy process, as it takes no longer than ten minutes to draw up.

What will you need to obtain a temporary voter's card

You will need a birth certificate, baptismal certificate, hospital or clinic records of birth, school records, a house permit indicating your name, or a letter from a local or traditional authority and a permanent residence permit.

However, if you have none of these available, a person with an identity document could identify you.

Who can obtain voter cards?

If you are not sure if your identity document is valid, it is best that you get a voter's card.

For more information about how to get your voter's card, please telephone: 0800-1139 37. This is a toll-free telephone number. ☼



Learning to vote at a voters' education workshop

You can make your X twice for the same party

At the negotiations, political parties agreed that there will be a double ballot in the April elections. This means voters will vote twice — once for a party to represent you in the National Assembly and the second time for the provincial government. It is very important to remember that YOU CAN VOTE FOR THE SAME PARTY TWICE

What will happen on the day you cast your vote?

There will be two separate papers and voting for the National Assembly will take place first. After you have placed the ballot in the box, you will be given another paper which you will use for voting for the provincial gov-

ernment.

Each province will have its own ballot paper for voting for the provincial government.

The National Assembly ballot paper will have:

- The names of all the parties,
- Its flag or symbol,
- Its abbreviation,
- A photograph of its leader, and

- A small box where you put your cross for the party are voting for.

The provincial government ballot paper will look the same, but it will only have the names of the parties that are contesting the elections in the province.

Only you can decide who you want to vote for. Voting twice should not confuse you. You must remember that you can vote for the same party/organisation twice.

The two stages of voting are as follows:

- 1 Show your ID to prove that you are eligible to vote.
- 2 Your hands are checked under ultra violet light to see if you have voted already.
- 3 You put your hands into ink. This ink is harmless. It can only be seen under ultra violet light.
- 4 Your ID or temporary voter's card is handed to an official who will stamp it.
- 5 A ballot paper is given to you.
- 6 You go into a voting booth where no one will see you
- 7 In secrecy, inside the booth, you place your mark next to the party of your choice and fold the ballot paper so that no one can see it. You must put your cross next to only one party.
- 8 Place your ballot paper in the box for the National Assembly votes.
- 9 Your ID is checked again.
- 10 You are given another ballot paper for the provincial government.
- 11 You vote again, in secret in a voting booth. You can vote for the same party again.
- 12 You place your folded ballot paper in the ballot box. ✪



WOMEN VOTE!
AND MAKE YOUR VOICES COUNT

WOMEN

THIS POSTER IS A JOINT PROJECT OF MATLA TRUST AND SPEAK



WOMEN VOTE!
AND MAKE YOUR VOICES COUNT

WOMEN

THIS POSTER IS A JOINT PROJECT OF MATLA TRUST AND SPEAK

Photo: Rodger Bosch



**Auntie
Eva
Beukes –
concerned
about her
pension**

Dreaming of freedom

For a long time, South Africans have dreamt of independence and freedom. What do ordinary people, especially women, want from the new South Africa? **Victor Munnik** and **Padi Matlala** spoke to a few women

"There should be a water tap in every yard," said Rebecca Makua and Johanna Makunyana, members of a women's group in Makua, Sekhukhuneland.

The women are building a community centre with a creche, a clinic and a community hall to improve the harsh conditions they live in. They have also started a poultry project.

Their only source of income in the past was working as labourers on wheat, potato and tomato farms, where they earned as little as 25 cents an hour. And they had no pension or compensation when they

were injured at work.

They have had enough of these conditions. Now they want change.

Makua, Makunyane and their friends say their lives will improve if they work for themselves.

They feel that there is enough land for them to farm and grow vegetables to sell. "We don't have to kick anybody off the land. We have enough communal land, but we need water."

The new government must build a big dam on the Steelpoort River, to supply them with water, they say.

They are going to vote, but know that change will not come



Photo: Brett Eloff

**Rebecca Makua – There
should be a tap in every
yard**

overnight.

"The new government will not be able to change a lot of things by itself. If communities are not well represented, change will be slow."

They also believe the role of chiefs must change.

"Why should chiefs get cars when other people get nothing. Chiefs must work for themselves and stop forcing others to work for them in their fields without pay," they said.

They also feel that women should be allowed to become chiefs. However, they agree that chiefs will still play an important role in the new South



Photo: Brett Eloff

Maria and Elizabeth Mahubedu – a new government must deal with pension problems and land issues

Africa.

For Elizabeth Mahubedu, a mother of six from Driekop, also in Sekhukhuneland, a new government must change the way the social welfare system works in Lebowa. It must sort out the problems people have had in getting their pensions.

The land issue is another problem which needs to be solved. There is a lot of land in Lebowa which is not being used and which can be given to those who want it.

Maria Mahubedu is looking beyond her physical needs. Although she is over 50, she would like to go back to school and learn how to read and write.

She cannot afford to pay fees on her current pension of R130 per month and expects the new government to pay for adult literacy education.

Auntie Eva Beukes loves the outdoor life herding goats in the Leliefontein district of Namaqualand. She has serious doubts about politics and the violence sweeping South Africa — mainly because she

WIN ★ WIN ★ WIN ★ WIN

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Question:

What is the monthly pension of Maria Mahubedu?

Answer

Name

Address

.....

.....

.....

Postal Code

Telephone number

Post your entry to:

SPEAK RADIO/CASSETTE COMPETITION
 PO Box 261363
 Excom
 2023
 South Africa

Competition rules: The decision of the judges is final. This competition is only open to people living in South and Southern Africa. Employees and relatives of employees of SPEAK are not allowed to enter. The closing date is 15 May. The winner will be announced in the July issue of SPEAK.

hears reports of killings every day on the radio.

Her main concern is her pension. It is her main source of cash, paying taxes for the grazing land, her house, groceries, the church and the burial society.

Auntie Eva wants all pensions to be the same as white pensions. She also wants a post office and pension pay-out point in Nourrivier.

Gadies Beukes who lives in

Nourrivier, not far from Auntie Eva's place, has a different view.

“People should not expect too much. They should accept that we will have to do most things for ourselves.

“Look at those thorn trees. They lose their leaves till they are just bare branches, and then they come out all covered in green and yellow. Life is like that.” ☼

Thanks to New Ground for permission to use this article



The pain of polygamy

There have been many debates over polygamy – where a man has more than one wife. It is not just the women who suffer – in many cases the children are the victims. Setsabile tells her story

Setsabile squats sadly next to an open fire as she absentmindedly pokes a stick into the ground, trying to figure out where her children's next meal will come from.

Her five-year-old son, Vezamafa, walks cautiously towards her, his deep-set eyes hopeful yet expecting the worst. "Is there any food mama?" he asks. Setsabile says the phrase she is beginning to hate: "No my son".

Setsabile and her three children, Vezamafa, Lindiwe (4)

and Gcinamasiko (2), are victims of polygamy.

Her husband, Mcondo, works as a driver in Siteki, about 95km from the Swazi capital Mbabane. He lives a few kilometres away from Setsabile with another wife and family.

"I will never forget the day my husband told me he was going to marry that woman," Setsabile said. "I am a second wife and I knew that sooner or later my husband would take another wife, but I hoped it would not come to that."



As she tells her story, Setsabile's mood changes from happiness to sadness to bitterness and, finally, to resigned acceptance.

"Our marriage was a happy one as far as polygamous ones go. He used to come home three times a week, having spent the other time with his first wife, LaSifundza. He cared for the kids and made sure they were well fed. He brought a 25 kg bag of mealie meal every month and would occasionally bring meat.

"But now that he has taken a third wife, we do not see him for months on end," she said.

Mcondo married his third

"Traditionally, a polygamous man is supposed to treat his different wives and families equally. But often, this does not happen and the man abandons one household in favour of another."

wife, LaNgwenya, when Setsabile was six months pregnant with Gcinamasiko.

"In the first months of his third marriage he remembered that I was his wife and he would come home now and then," Setsabile said.

According to Swazi custom, Mcondo is supposed to treat his three wives and families fairly and equally and provide for all of them.

But, like many other polygamous men, Mcondo did not do this.

When a husband abandons one household in favour of another, the "rejected" wife can report him to his family. They are obliged to take him to task.

After Setsabile complained, Mcondo's family did talk to him. But he continued to shirk his responsibilities to care for Setsabile and the children.

"I believe LaNgwenya bewitched him, because he spends almost all his time at her house. He also does not visit LaSifundza's house as much as he used to," Setsabile said.

"However, LaSifundza's life is better than mine because she joined a women's organisation where she learnt to sew. This organisation helps her by selling the things she makes. At least she has a little bit of

money to get by, unlike me.

"I have to scarp and scrounge to get even one meal a day for my children. Sometimes they go to bed hungry," she added.

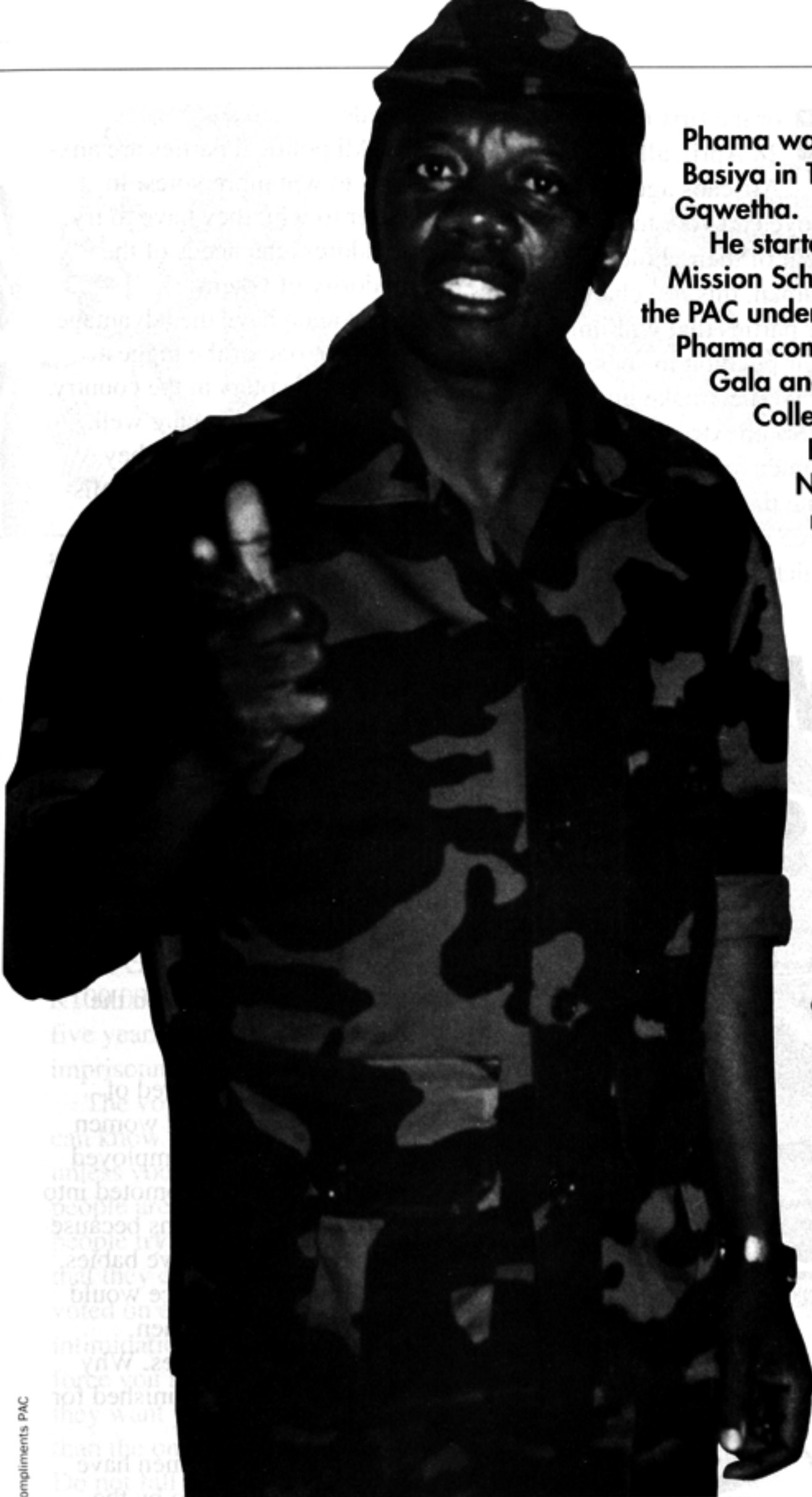
Mcondo's family tried to help Setsabile when they could, but when the drought set in, they stopped giving her maize.

"What is most painful is that I have to go and beg for food for my children when their father is alive and working. But what can I do? I am not trained for anything. I'm scared to start learning now when I'm so old but I guess I have no choice, unless I want my children to starve to death," she added.

For now, Setsabile's main worry is finding food for her children. But next year, she will also need to find money to send Vezamafa to school.

"I pray that, by that time, Vezi's father will have come to his senses, or that the muti LaNgwenya bewitched him with will have worn off," she said.

However, this may be wishful thinking. Will the man who deserted his family for two years miraculously remember that his children now need him more than ever? ★



Phama was born on March 31 1949 at Basiya in Transkei to Cyril and Phylis Gqwetha.

He started his primary education at Basani Mission School in 1955. His first contact with the PAC underground was in the early 1960s.

Phama completed his secondary education at Gala and was expelled from St John's College in Umtata in 1967.

He studied for his matric at Ngangelizwe High School where he revived his contact with the PAC underground.

In 1970 he worked and studied part-time at the University of the Witwatersrand. He studied for a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Fort Hare in 1973 but was expelled for taking part in a students' strike.

Phama was among the first group of PAC cadres to leave the country in 1976 to undergo training in Tanzania. After receiving military training in China, he was among 25 cadres who came back into the country.

Fighting from within proved very difficult and in 1978, Sabelo and his comrades were arrested and detained for two years. On their release in 1980, they escaped to Lesotho. In 1981 he was appointed the PAC's secretary for publicity.

He married Dudu Ngobasi in 1986. They have three children, a daughter Nomfundo and twins, Andile and Sandile.

● *Information from the Sowetan*

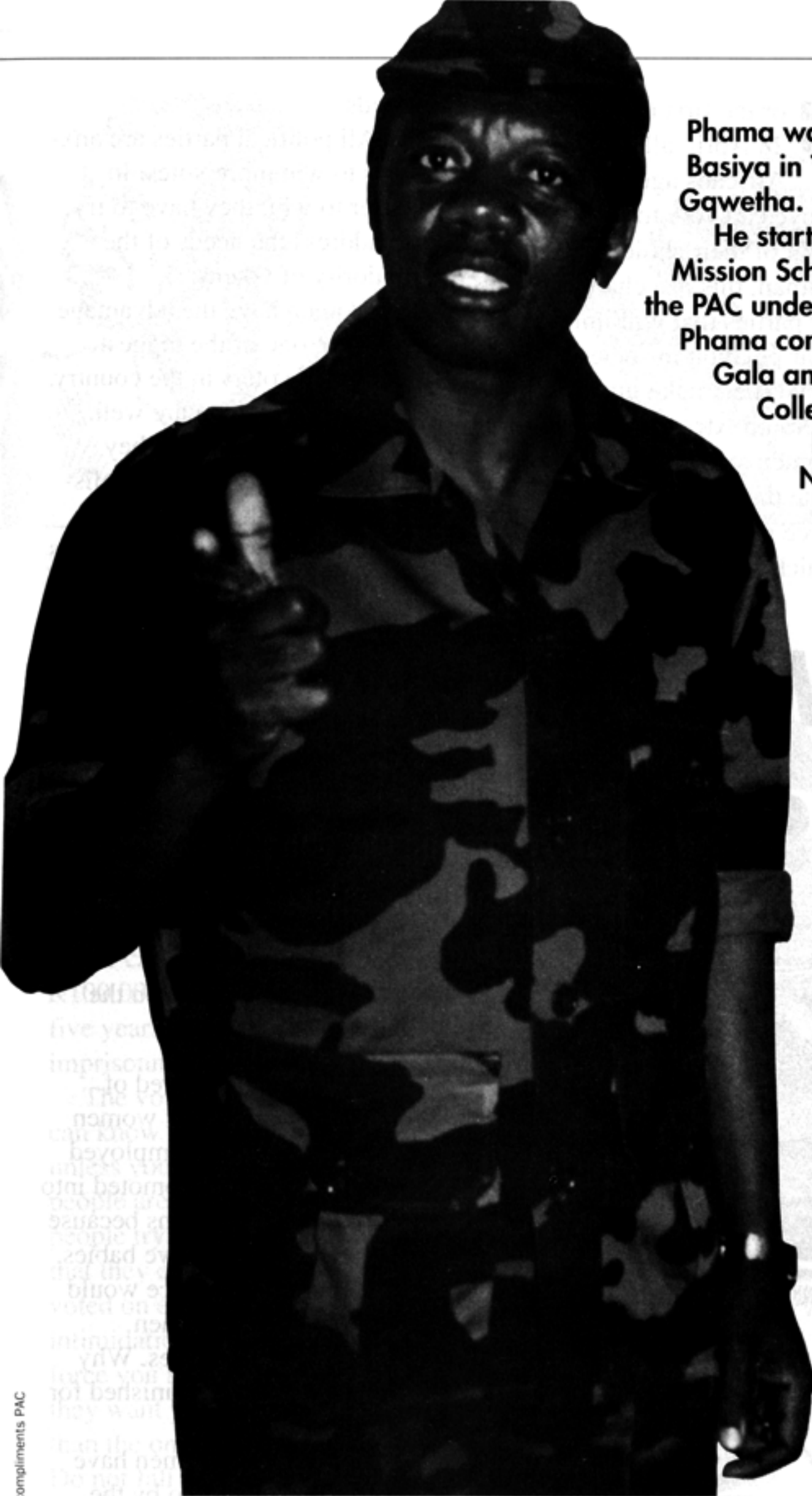
itary priorities were carried out. Phama did not go out of his way to be popular. He did not care whether the media thought he was a good guy or not. In fact, he was not a favourite of the media because he did not say things that made white peo-

ple comfortable.

But he cared what black people thought about his organisation. He was concerned that African people should know what the struggle for liberation was all about and if their aspirations would become a reality.

Phama's death has shocked both friend and foe. Suddenly it does not matter whether anyone agreed or disagreed with his beliefs.

All that matters now is that he was a great son of the African soil. ☛



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Women's vote gives them the power to pressurise political parties to adopt policies that will meet women's needs

For the first time, from 26-28 April, all South Africans aged 18 and above can vote for a government of their choice. For women, this is a chance to vote for parties that will improve their position in society.

Women make up 53 percent of South Africa's population. If women stand up and clearly state their demands, they can force parties to adopt policies which will meet some of their

The power of women's vote

needs.

All political parties are anxious to win more votes. In order to win, they have to try to address the needs of the majority of voters.

Women have the advantage of being one of the biggest groups of voters in the country. As long as women are well organised and united, they stand a good chance of realising some of their goals.

Remember that your vote as a woman is a demand for the right to:

- Ownership of property
- Equality before the law
- Equal taxation
- An end to the abuse of women
- Equal education opportunities
- Equal job opportunities
- Equal consideration for promotion
- No discrimination on the basis of gender

Women are tired of hearing that women cannot be employed in certain jobs or promoted into management positions because they will leave to have babies. The entire human race would cease to exist if women stopped having babies. Why should women be punished for building a family?

For too long women have been told what to do by the men in their lives. Most women have only been allowed choices acceptable to their fathers, boyfriends or husbands. Many women have already been told who to vote for by their husbands.

According to the electoral law, it is an offence for anyone to use violence or sexual



Graphics: Women's Ministries, Institute for Contextual Theology



harassment to **force** another person to do any of the following:

- Vote for a party
- Not vote for their party
- Attend or not attend any political event
- Tell anyone who they voted for

Anyone who tries to force someone to do any of the above can be fined up to R100 000 or jailed for up to five years. Both the fine and imprisonment can apply.

The vote is secret. No one can know who you voted for unless you tell them. Some people are already lying to people trying to convince them that they can find out how they voted on election day. This is intimidation. It is an attempt to force you to vote for the party they want you to support rather than the one of your choice. Do not fall for these tricks. No one will know how you voted unless you tell them.

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) is preparing for the election and has a set of rules on what behaviour will be an offence. It has an Electoral Code of Conduct which outlines offences and penalties.

**The vote is secret.
No one can know
who you voted
for unless you
tell them...**

Anyone who uses force, violence, sexual harassment or threats against you in connection with voting, is guilty of an offence.

Please inform the IEC about such behaviour on telephone number: (011) 928-1000

This means that no person can force anyone who is aware of their rights to act in a way which is not their free choice.

If all women take the trouble to inform themselves and spread information about voting to those around them, there

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Education Competition,
PO Box 261363, Excom,
2023,

South Africa

Competition rules: The decision of the judges is final. This competition is only open to people living in South Africa. Employees and relatives of employees of SPEAK are not allowed to enter. The closing date is 16 May 1994. The winner will be announced in the July issue of SPEAK.

should be no cases of women being told by their menfolk how to vote and who to vote for.

It is the duty of all women to vote for a South Africa that is free from gender discrimination.

Despite women's contribution to the struggle to liberate this country, most of their demands are still not taken very seriously. It has taken many years for women's voices to be heard. If women use their vote wisely, they can make a difference. ★

This land is our land



At the Community Land Conference in Bloemfontein, women demanded power and rights over land and their lives. Rosalee Telela spoke to two of these women

The Community Land Conference was the first ever gathering of rural and landless people to voice their demands about land.

Since 1960, more than 3.5 million people in South Africa have been forcibly removed from their land. Today, six million people live on privately owned white farms, never knowing when they might be chased off.

Ellen Ntsoelengoe from Haartebeesfontein knows the suffering caused by forced removals. And in 1990 she started working with the Rural Women's Movement (RWM) to do something about this.

"Many people in the rural areas have no rights on the land they live on or do not have land, forcing them to live in poverty," said Ntsoelengoe.

"The majority living in rural areas are black women who have no jobs, no land and very little formal education. Not only do we have to deal with the fact that the government

After much debate at multi-party talks, women won the battle to make sure that women can own land

Demands agreed on

The following are some of the women's demands agreed on at the national Community Land Conference:

- Women and men should have equal rights to land and women — whether married or single — should be able to own land. Married couples should have their houses registered in the names of both partners.
- Women should have equal representation in local government.
- There should be no discrimination against women in inheritance rights.
- Women should benefit from development programmes and be targeted for training.
- Women living on farms must have security.
- There should be special subsidies for women who cannot afford housing.
- A ministry of women's affairs should have offices in every local government to ensure women's rights are protected.

gave most of the land to whites, but also with traditional leaders and men in our community who do not want women to own the little land that is left," she explained.

"Sometimes women have to work for white farmers to get extra money because the money their husbands earn is not enough or they do not send money home at all. Others become farm workers because they do not have any land. These are either single women or women whose husbands do not have land," said Ntsoelengoe.

"If women could own land, they would be able to survive on their own and not depend on men."

Yvonne Padi from Modderfontein said traditional laws and practices make it difficult for women to have control over land. "Only men have the right to own land and only sons can inherit land. A woman living in a rural area and who is in a customary marriage is like a child with no rights. She has no say in what goes on."

Padi says life became more difficult for women after the land was taken away from

black people. "Men go to the towns to work, while women are left to take care of the children, the land and animals."

But women are not sitting back and accepting their suffering.

Through organisation and mobilisation, they are fighting, not only for land, but for control over their lives.

This is what the Rural Women's Movement (RWM) has been doing, says Padi.

"Where I live, it is not like before when the chiefs, kgotla's or the government used to tell us what to do. Women no longer accept anything until they have met and discussed things."

Speaking about her experience of organising in her area, Padi said: "The response from women was good. Women welcomed the idea of a women's group."

Already women have made some important strides.

The constitution for the new South Africa says men and women are equal and there must be no discrimination

against women.

During the multi-party talks, traditional leaders demanded that customary and traditional law should be more important than the constitutional principle of equality between men and women. Women within the negotiating forum and women's groups nationally, including the RWM, fought against this. Women won the battle.

"As a result, it will now be possible for women to own land. This victory is a result of women's groups growing and people accepting that it was time women started learning to take the future in their own hands," Ntsoelengoe said.

Ntsoelengoe and Padi want the new government to address the demands of rural women in a serious way.

"They should train women so that they can stand on their own and also lead the nation. They must make sure women are educated because there are thousands of women who never went to school. Many women do not know how to vote because they cannot read. There has to be political education for women because often women do not know what is going on."

Ntsoelengoe added: "They have to close not only the gap between races, but the gap between men and women which has been open for so long. Women should make sure that the future government does exactly that."

Padi believes women have to continue to fight: "As women we have to build ourselves and show those women who are not interested that we will fight for what women need." ☆

Many areas in Transkei are hard to reach, making it difficult for AIDS counsellors to spread the message throughout rural communities



Photo: SPEAK

Home to die

Transkei's AIDS epidemic is getting worse as infected migrant workers are sent home with no counselling. Now the National AIDS Programme is trying to do something about it

After spending half their adult lives working away from home, many migrant workers from the Transkei are returning home to die a slow and painful death. Many will die of AIDS but may never know this.

The National Aids Programme (NAP) has started a community-based project to help these men and women learn more about HIV infection and AIDS.

The project's coordinator is Fikki Khumalo and Thandeka Jadezweni is NAP's counsellor in Umtata, Transkei. Counselling is the greatest part of NAP's work.

Jadezweni studied in the United States of America (US) and has a BA degree in sociology. Her studies also included counselling and social work. After completing her studies, she worked in a US hospital for two years before coming

home in 1993.

During her work in the US, she dealt with patients who were HIV-positive and those with full-blown AIDS.

"That is when I gained my skills in counselling," she said. In the US, she said, AIDS has reached its worst stage. "Many people are infected and know what AIDS is. Now they are learning how to cope with AIDS."

Working in Transkei — where AIDS is spreading rapidly — is an even bigger challenge for Jadezweni.

Since she joined the Umtata project last September, she has worked with rural communities in all 11 regions. Eleven community workers have been trained in supportive and care service to help their communities cope with the AIDS epidemic.

The first AIDS case in Umtata was diagnosed in 1987

by the Border Blood Transfusion Service. Between 1987-1991, 38 men and 44 women were diagnosed in Transkei hospitals as being HIV positive.

This figure increased dramatically in 1993, when 473 HIV cases were diagnosed — 186 men and 287 women.

Jadezweni said only one woman in Transkei had full-blown AIDS in the 1988-91 period. But between January and August last year, 22 women and 11 men had full-blown AIDS.

"This has certainly reached crisis levels. Most people in the region are migrant workers and most of them are coming back home, either because they have been retrenched or are too sick to continue working," she said.

"Most come back with letters from their employers saying they must go to hospital



because they are sick or because their blood is bad. No one tells them exactly what's wrong with them."

According to Jadezweni, counselling is central in the fight against AIDS and helps people cope with their situation. But many workers are sent home without being counselled.

Because of a lack of counselling, infected husbands continued to have unprotected sex with their wives or girlfriends, she said. This was the major cause of the spread of HIV.

"They haven't had any counselling. They only know that they are sick. The other problem is deep denial — when people just don't want to accept that they are infected."

Transkei's rural areas are often hard to reach because of a lack of transport. Health workers therefore have problems reaching the people.

The 11 community workers in the NAP programme have been taught basic counselling skills and how to deal with patients.

The hospitals have linked up with community workers in the 11 regions. Patients are sent to the counsellors by the hospitals.

"The response to the programme has been positive, but transport remains our major problem in our effort to reach more people," Jadezweni said. "More counsellors are needed for us to cover all the 11 regions better. We are growing slowly but surely, but as an NGO we can only do so

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



much."

Illiteracy has also affected the AIDS awareness programme.

"Most people cannot read and therefore educational messages in newspapers and magazines on HIV infection and AIDS have not been very effective."

The government is willing to work with the NAP because it has seen that the programme is useful in the fight against AIDS. ☉

Vanessa rides

During the heyday of apartheid, Vanessa Kennedy used to get chased off Cape Town's whites-only beaches. Her crime? She wanted to surf at the Cape's best and safest beaches like white children were.

"My two sisters and I used to duck and dive the police so that we could surf at Muizenberg beach. It was only once we were in the water that we were safe, as the police could not see what colour we were. If, however, we got caught, it was off to the 'coloureds only' beach," recalls Kennedy.

Today she is South Africa's only black woman in competitive surfing. After surfing for six years, she decided, two years ago, to try out competitions and has been competing since 1992.

"I'm the only black woman surfer and it's very lonely in the surfing world, which is dominated by white men," she says.

"You will surf with the guys, but are never really one of them."

Kennedy says she had no one to coach her. "I'm self-taught. Whilst I have learnt a lot through my own experiences, I've missed out on gaining the competitive skills I need so badly if I'm to win competitions."

In January, Kennedy was invited to the national surfing trials but did not make it to the next trial. She believes this is



because she has not learnt the finer methods of surfing.

But Kennedy, a 25-year-old University of the Western Cape (UWC) student, is determined not to give up.

"I love surfing and will surf as long as I am able to," she says.

Despite the Cape's icy waters, Kennedy practices daily, making sure her body is

protected with a thick wetsuit.

In the July holidays, the Kennedy family pays their regular visit to the warmer waters of Plettenberg Bay, a few hours drive from Cape Town. Vanessa spends most of this time surfing.

Kennedy is already proving to be a role model for disadvantaged girls who are showing an interest in surfing.

the waves



Vanessa Kennedy, South Africa's only black woman in competitive surfing: "Women come off second best in surfing. They have difficulty getting sponsorship. The guys also get more prize money than women."

"Lots of girls ask me to show them how to surf. I spend quite a bit of time with them on the beach. We need to have more black girls getting involved in this sport and I will try my best to help them," she says.

Surfing is an expensive sport. Surfers need a surfing board, which costs about R800, plus a wetsuit. Kennedy is

lucky — a Cape Town company sponsors her wetsuits. However, she has to buy her own boards.

So, what is it like riding the waves? "I cannot describe the feeling," she says. "Only a surfer can know the feeling. You are on the wave and it is fast, very fast. You concentrate only on the wave and riding it. It is a wonderful feeling and you know you cannot get hurt by the waves," she adds excitedly.

Last year, Kennedy was selected for the national development team to visit Morocco. She could not make the trip because she did not have enough money.

"My dream trip to Morocco did not happen because, as a black woman surfer, it was difficult to raise the funds. Women really come off second best in surfing," she said.

"The guys get better sponsorship and more prize money than women. They are the ones who usually win competitions and therefore have a better chance of getting sponsors. Women have a lot of difficulty finding sponsors. It is even more difficult for the only black woman in competitive surfing to find a sponsor," she says almost angrily.

About her future? "I will always be involved in surfing, particularly to help the young girls who want to surf. I've learnt something and would like to pass on to others the experience which I have.

"I still have to realise my dream," she says with a twinkle in her eyes as she picks up her surf board and makes for the waves. "I must surf the big waves of Hawaii." ★

Coping with stress



What is stress?

When your body and mind become tired from trying to cope with the difficulties of everyday life, you are suffering from stress.

The stress might be caused by poverty, breaking up with a partner, sickness, fear, death, the political situation or losing a job.

Different people experience stress in different ways. Stress can make you sick. It can also make you feel you cannot cope with life.

When you are under stress you may:

- Get irritated easily and pick fights with others for no reason.
- Feel as if there is a knot inside your chest.
- Have difficulty in falling asleep.
- Have panic attacks which are frightening. If you have a panic attack, your breathing gets heavier and faster. Your hands start to tingle and you feel as if you are going to die. The attack often ends in a fainting spell.
- Feel very depressed. You no longer feel like doing things you enjoy.

Thousands of South Africans suffer from stress. This is not surprising. South Africa is one of the most stressful countries in the world. In this article, we offer some tips on coping with stress

Physical signs of stress

Your body may show different signs of stress:

- Headaches above or behind your eyes, pain at the back of the neck, or around your head;
- Muscle pains along your shoulders and up into your neck;
- Common illnesses like colds or flu (your body is too weak to fight against them);
- Stomach problems like diarrhoea or constipation and even stomach ulcers.

Many South Africans suffer from high blood pressure (hypertension), which gets worse when they are under stress.

Many people with skin problems find stress makes it worse.

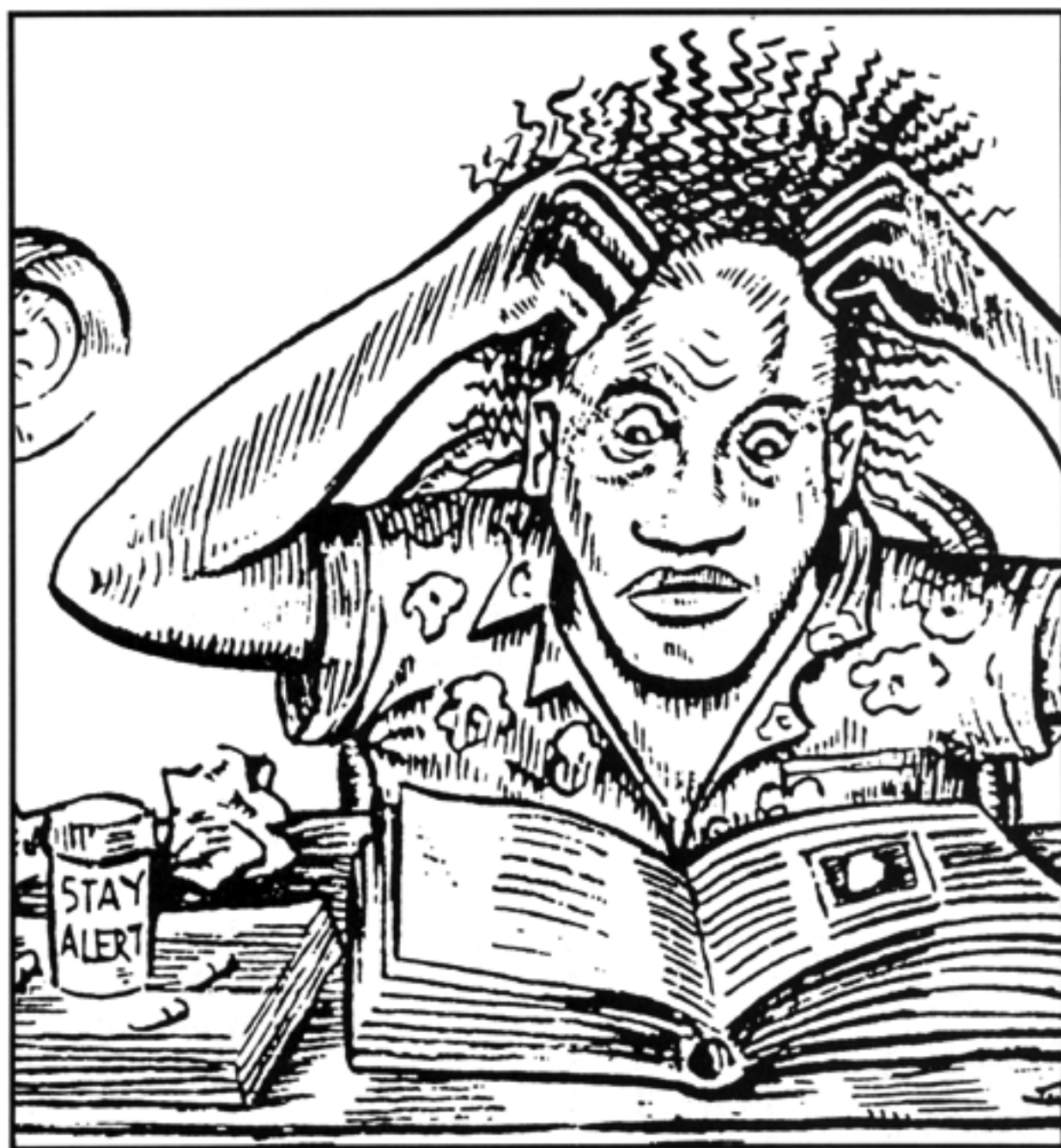
A person who is under a lot of stress is more likely to have

a heart attack.

What you can do

The most important thing to do is to find the cause of your stress. Talk to someone about the problems in your life and what might be causing the stress. Once you have done this, there are many ways to deal with it.

- The first step is to care for yourself.
- If you are constipated, try to eat brown bread and more fruit and vegetables;
- If you have a very sore pain in your stomach, especially after eating, go to a doctor or clinic to get treatment. You might have an ulcer.
- If you suffer from high blood pressure, visit your doctor or clinic regularly.
- You can also let your emotions out by hitting a cushion,



crying or shouting.

● If you get a panic attack, take deep, slow breaths. Talk to yourself calmly. In this way you will begin to calm down and will be able to deal with things better.

More ideas

● Relaxation exercises are very good for relieving ten-

sion. Lie down in a quiet place and close your eyes. Tense different parts of your body for a few seconds, then relax, starting with your toes and working up to your head. Finally, let your mind relax by clearing it of all thoughts. Think of somewhere quiet and peaceful. You can do this silently, or with quiet music. If you do this for

a few minutes a day, or when you feel especially irritable or angry, it will help you feel calm and positive.

● Get someone to rub those sore shoulders and muscles of yours. A massage is a great way to spend some special time with people you love. It will help to do away with headaches, muscle pains and depression because, like exercise, it makes you feel good about yourself.

● Being healthy helps you deal with stress. Eat a balanced diet with lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. Eat less salt.

● Take up a hobby — do something that makes you feel good about your life. You may enjoy dancing, listening to music, gardening or reading — as long as it relaxes you and makes you feel happy.

● Laughter is good for your health. It helps to let out stress. Doctors say changes occur in your body after you have had a good laugh. Your stress level drops and you feel better. So make friends with people who make you laugh!

People who learn to cope with stress are healthier and live longer than those who bottle it up. So, close your eyes and relax. ☼

HEALTH BRIEFS

Preventing vaginal infections

Many women, young and old, suffer from vaginal infections at one point or another in their lives. However, there are many things you can do to prevent this. Here are some of the things you can do:

- Get plenty of rest and sleep.
- Avoid using flannels or sponges to wash the genital area as these can shelter germs.
- Always wipe from front to back.
- Avoid vaginal deodorant sprays.
- Keep your nails short and your hands clean.
- Wear cotton underwear.
- Avoid coloured toilet paper.
- Avoid tights pants and expose the genital area to air and sunlight if you get the opportunity.

Women die as a result of pregnancy

More than half a million women worldwide die each year due to pregnancy and childbirth, often because emergency services are not available. In Africa, one out of 21 women is at high risk of dying during pregnancy.

Emergency services can save women's lives and prevent the injuries that millions suffer each year

as a result of pregnancy and childbirth.

Injuries include infertility, damage to the uterus and seizures (like fits).

Making family planning available could save many lives. It reduces the number of unsafe abortions and high risk pregnancies.

Fighting cancer

Cancer is a terrible disease, but it can be prevented. A healthy and well-balanced diet can help reduce the risk of cancer.

Lean meat, fibre and fresh fruit and vegetables are some of the best defences against cancer. Research has shown that foods high in Vitamin A and C also cut down the risk of cancer.

Smoking increases your chances of getting cancer.

Thirty percent of cancer deaths are caused by smoking. South Africa has a very high percentage of smokers. Advertising encourages women and teenagers in particular to smoke.

South Africa also has one of the highest incidents of cervical cancer in the world. Having only one sex partner and practising safe sex, as well as regular pap smears, can help prevent the disease.

Cancer can be beaten if it is discovered early because it can be treated easily. People should examine themselves and have check-ups.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Last year a public health report said more than 250 million sexually active teenagers and adults, throughout the world, will have suffered from a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) by the end of last year.

Many STDs can be cured. But if left untreated, STDs can be life-threatening.

Researchers find that STD's are common among women who visit prenatal, family planning and gynaecological clinics. By the year 2000, HIV will have infected 30 to 40 million people and 10 million will have developed AIDS.



As a matter of fact...

Woman kills husband because of sexual abuse

A woman accused of murdering her husband sobbed in court as she told a Rand Supreme Court judge how her husband sexually abused and humiliated her. Sheila Ann Cantrill of Kempton Park admitted that she had shot her husband, Ross Cantrill, but pleaded not guilty to murder. She told the court that he had "used her as a man uses a man" after telling her he did not want to see her face when they had sex. He had also tied a dog leash around her neck and tied her hands behind her back during sex.

Children denied citizenship

The struggle continues for Botswana women married to foreigners. Their children are still being denied citizenship. This is so despite the 1992 court ruling that the Botswana Citizenship Act is unconstitutional.

The women cannot enter the children in their passports. The children have to get foreign passports and apply for residence permits every two years. These children also do not qualify for state-financed education.

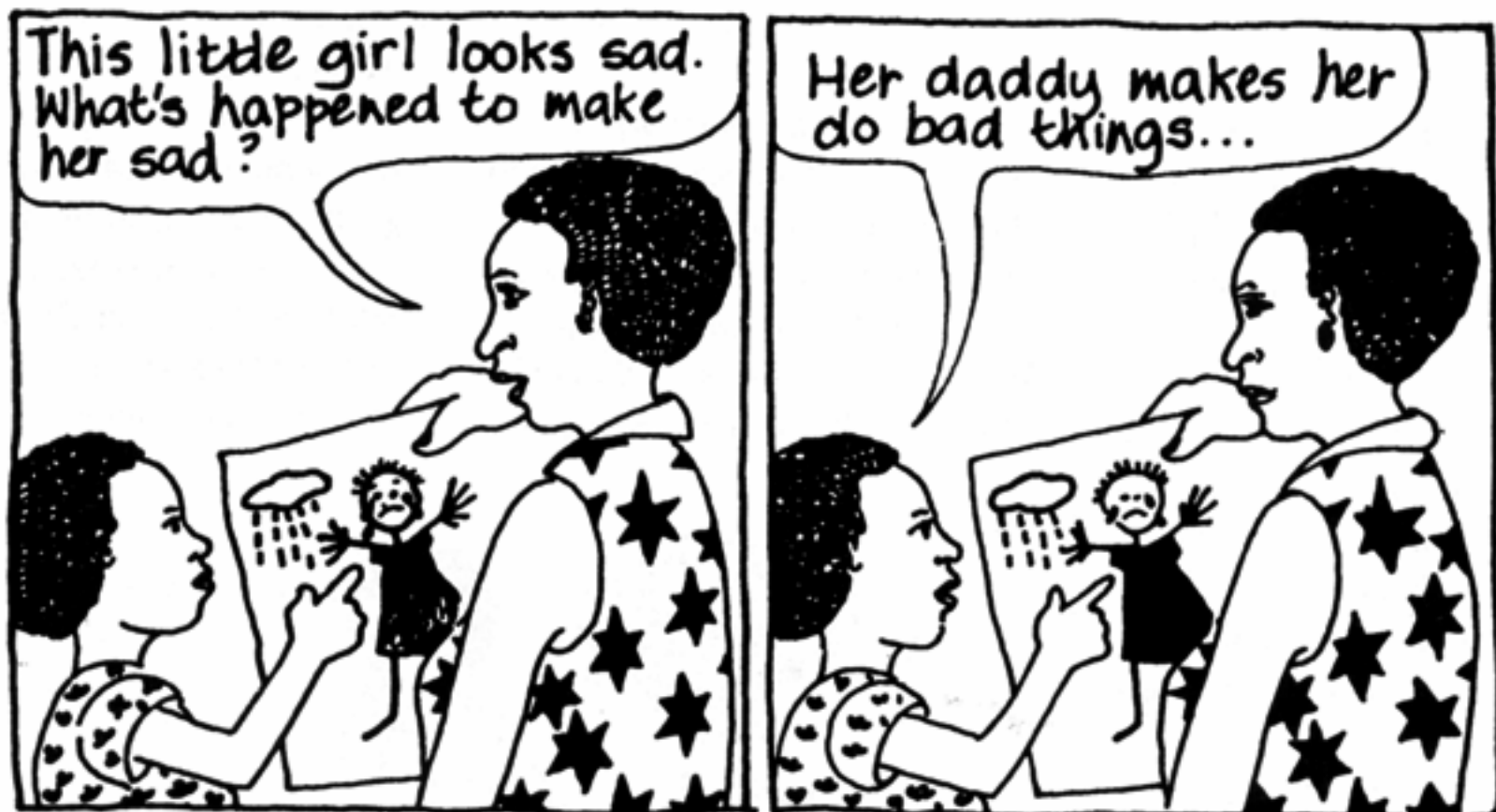
Woman sues for a failed abortion

In the Netherlands, a woman who gave birth to a child after a failed abortion is suing the gynaecologist who performed the procedure.

Nine weeks after undergoing the procedure, the woman discovered she was still pregnant and gave birth to a girl.

A pro-life group, Foundation for the Unborn Child, has questioned the morals behind her asking payment for bringing up an 'unwanted' child.

Under Dutch law, abortions are available up to week 13 of pregnancy.



Family rape trial

A 12-year-old boy witnessed his father repeatedly raping his sister, a Port Elizabeth court heard recently. The boy was giving evidence in his father's trial. He told the court that he saw his father raping his sister on three different occasions.

The girl, now aged 15, cried as she told how she had been raped by her father for eight

years. She said her father had taken her into his bedroom every time her mother went out. When she told her mother of the first rape, her mother demanded an explanation from her father.

He denied it, slapping the mother and beating the girl. As a result, she kept quiet every time he raped her. The truth only came out when she started behaving strangely at school.

TAXI TALK

The trouble with lobola

Modisi is a nursing sister at Leratong Hospital. She married Sello, a school teacher, a year ago. They have one child.

Sello paid R5 000 lobola for Modisi. Her parents felt she was worth this much because she was educated. They felt that they had sent her to school but she had not paid them back.

Sello and Modisi had an expensive wedding but they were never happy in their marriage. A year later, they divorced.

Throughout the marriage the couple had problems. Sello insisted that he would have nothing to do with running the household because he felt it was Modisi's responsibility. After all, she was working and he had paid a lot of lobola for her. As far as he was concerned, he had bought her. He owned her and there was nothing she could do about it.

Apart from the verbal abuse, Modisi had to endure being beaten up.

To make matters worse, Modisi had no-one to turn to. Her parents wanted her to remain in the marriage. They had "eaten" his money. Her in-laws felt a lot of money had been paid for her.

Modisi is just one of the many South African women who remain in loveless marriages because someone has paid a lot of money for them. Because lobola has

become so commercialised, many parents are demanding large sums of money without stopping to think what this could do to their children's future.

I have always believed that when two people decide to settle down, the main aim of lobola is to bring the two families together. In the olden days, people paid lobola with cows, goats, sheep and so on, as a token.

These days, the woman's family puts a price tag on their daughter. The more educated she is, the more expensive.

Some people have argued that, if men stop paying lobola for their wives, women will feel cheap and insulted. Her in-laws will have little respect for her. She will be harassed and humiliated. I think this is nonsense —

with or without lobola, women are harassed, abused and humiliated in marriages.

Lobola has lost its meaning. No one has a right to own another human being. Women cannot continue to suffer because of outdated traditions. What happens if the man cannot afford to pay the lobola demanded by his in-laws?

Does this mean that two people who love each other have to end the relationship? Are the parents being fair to their son-in-law, who was also sent to school by his parents?

Marriage is a joint venture and two people should be allowed to go into it on equal terms.

Let us get married anytime we want and not be deprived by customs and traditions. We must stop this oppression now. ✪



NOTICES

A Museum for All

Over 200 000 years ago, at Soutpan, near Pretoria, a meteor fell from the sky and made a large hollow in the ground. A meteor is a piece of burning rock that was once part of a star or a planet. A museum has now been opened at the place, called Tswaing.

It is an environmental museum which teaches you about people, animals and birds that have lived there.

If you would like to visit Tswaing, contact:

The National Cultural History Museum

P O Box 28088

Sunnyside 0132

Telephone: (012) 341 1320

Free Copies of SPEAK

SPEAK magazine invites all women, men, boys, girls, organisations, churches, youth groups — anyone — to call us to ask for free copies of our old magazines. Copies from the past two years are available.

To get your copies and for more information, contact Jacqueline Mathabe at: Office 7, 17th Floor

Conlyn House
156 President Street

Johannesburg

Telephone: (011) 29 6166

Community Action Against AIDS

Township AIDS Project (TAP) is a non-governmental organisation working with HIV/AIDS issues.

TAP can help you by giving you information about AIDS. If you need to talk to someone about AIDS — we are here. We counsel those who want to be tested for HIV, those who are HIV positive, people living with AIDS and their friends and families.

We have leaflets, condoms and other material which we give out. We educate individuals and groups about AIDS. Use us!

Phone us at:

(011) 982 1016/1027

Or visit us at:

Ipelegeng Community Centre

Cnr Khumalo & Phera Streets

White City, Jabavu
Soweto

New Pre-School Opened

Eclah Pre-School admits children from the age of one to six. They offer boarding and after-school care for children from different schools in Johannesburg. They also give one-day care when parents are in town for the day.

There is also evening care for the children when parents are working night shift or are out for social meetings.

For more information, contact them at this address:

Hekro Square, 2nd Floor

25 Plein Street

Johannesburg

Telephone: (011) 642 5869

Reproductive health conference

The first South African conference to give priority to reproductive health will take place from 21-24 June 1994.

All workers in the field of reproductive health are invited to submit papers and to attend the conference.

A small number of bursaries are available on application.

For further details, please contact:

M Vajifidar

Reproductive Health Priorities

Conference

PO Box 306

2050 Wits

Fax/Telephone number:

(011) 642 5983 during office hours

The closing date is 1 May 1994

Family Mental Health Conference

The African Regional Council of the World Federation for Mental Health and the South African Federation for Mental Health will host an African Regional Conference in South Africa from 24-27 October.

People working in the field of mental health, mental illness and mental handicap are invited to share ideas about programmatic approaches and rehabilitation strategies.

For more information contact:

The Programme Committee

African Regional Conference

SA Federation for Mental Health

PO Box 2587

Johannesburg 2000

Telephone: (011) 725 5800

YOU'VE

PRAYED

FOR IT

YOU'VE

WORKED

FOR IT

YOU'VE

STRUGGLED

FOR IT

YOU'VE

LONGED

FOR IT

NOW

VOTE

FOR IT



**HEAL
OUR
LAND**



**VOTE
APRIL
27TH**

John DePoe 64000