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Note from the Editors:

Due to both limitations of space and unavailability of materials, we have been unable to include Angola in our compendium. We hope to rectify this omission shortly.

Cover design by Marie Jensen
Photo: Road work crew, Lesotho, 1969
United Nations, Muldoon/jr/

AFRICAN WOMEN UNDER APARTHEID

by Elizabeth S. Landis

Excerpts from a paper prepared for the Unit on Apartheid of the United Nations. Mrs. Landis is also the author of a study of repressive legislation in South Africa, published by the Unit on Apartheid in 1970.

Summarized briefly and crudely, the theory of *apartheid* posits the existence of ten culturally distinct and mutually antagonistic "peoples" or "nations" within South Africa. All whites, lumped together regardless of mother tongue, constitute the "white nation". Africans, on the other hand, are deemed to constitute a number of different nations, determined largely by language or dialectal differences.

To provide for geographical separation and restore the traditional culture of the various nations of the Republic, the South African Government has allocated to each nation a "homeland" in which only members of that nation (as determined by descent) are citizens and all other persons are mere rightless aliens. It is official doctrine that each African nation can develop its own homeland at its own speed according to its own genius, values and ways of life.

Effect on women

The disabilities of African women in the cities arise primarily from the fact that they are viewed as the key to a possible breakdown of geographical separation. Government officials recognize the homemaking role of the women and fear that their presence in the cities will lead to the establishment of a stable black urban population. Such blacks will then, they reason, demand permanent residence — and other — rights in the white homeland where, by hypothesis, they are entitled to none. Until *apartheid* is abolished, therefore, there can be no fundamental change in the status of African women in the urban areas.

The disabilities which particularly affect African women in the homelands ("reserves") arise out of the other phase of the theory of *apartheid*, namely, the attempt to restore traditional African culture.

In fact, many facets of traditional African culture (e.g. the cattle culture, which requires virtually limitless grazing) cannot be restored or are inconsistent with the basis premises of *apartheid* or interfere with white South Africa's need for a constant supply

The nine homelands provided for the black 70 per cent of the South African population consist of a hodge-podge of several hundred isolated tracts of land, constituting less than 13 per cent of the Republic's land surface. They are eroded and over-farmed and, even under maximum development, will be unable to support a substantial proportion of the population assigned to them. They lack urban centres, industries (or even the infrastructure to support them), important exploitable mineral deposits and seaports.

The remaining 87 per cent of South Africa, with its cities, industries, mines, road systems and ports, constitutes the homeland of the whites, who comprise less than 20 per cent of the country's population. (It also contains "group areas" set apart for Coloureds and Asians, who do not, however, have homelands.) African men from the reserves, desperately seeking work to support their families, may be admitted to the white homeland by express permission, to fill the (low paid) jobs which white workers disdain. They are deemed "transient labour units" and shipped out when they are no longer useful.

of cheap black labour for its farms, industries and mines. Moreover, the revival of certain other aspects of early African culture — e.g. animist religion — would not be tolerated by the devout "national Christian" Afrikaners. Consequently, the South African régime has created a specious version of African traditions (some verifiable, some partly correct, some spurious) which is convenient for white purposes and has foisted it on the blacks as the old-time culture by which they must abide.

This version reflects the authoritarian and patriarchal attitudes of the whites who devised it. In particular, it incorporates many restrictions on women which are totally out of keeping with their modern attitudes, education, situation and needs — restrictions which, if they did exist in an earlier era, existed in conjunction with other rights or safeguards that white legislators, administrators and judges now ignore.

Since the imposition of this white-synthesized culture on Africans is required by the fundamental premises of *apartheid*, the discrimination against black women which is built into the culture can be ended only by abolishing *apartheid*.

AFRICAN WOMEN IN THE RESERVES

African women in the reserves suffer disabilities in virtually every facet of existence — not the least of which is that they cannot, like their menfolk, try to escape their lot by going to the cities. For nearly a decade, influx control and pass laws (discussed later in connexion with women in urban areas) have absolutely prohibited black women from entering the cities and towns.

Although African women both in the cities and in the reserves are subject to the same disabilities, women in the reserves are particularly affected by those discussed in this section — denial of rights in land and lack of local job opportunities.

Denial of the right to own land

No African may have any interest in land in the white homeland or in any homeland where he may reside if he is not a citizen.

Even in the homeland of which he is a citizen, an African is unlikely to own land. At best he will have quitrent tenure. Government policy emphasizes the continuance or restoration of communal ownership of land as one aspect of traditional culture. Under such ownership, according to South African anthropologists, Africans were granted only the right to use land, and that right was subject to enlargement, diminution or termination, depending on relative personal or communal needs.

Since there is not enough land in any reserve to support its normal population, land allotment is a difficult and troublesome problem, exacerbated by the "resettlement" in the reserves of Africans from

Lack of local job opportunities

Women of the reserves, who are barred from seeking jobs in the cities where they are available, are also handicapped in seeking the few jobs which exist in the reserve. As a practical matter, some jobs are reserved for men, whether by custom, by employer fiat or by physical or other occupational requirements.

African women are frequently less mobile than their men. They cannot leave household responsibilities so casually; widows generally dare not leave their homesteads to be near a job source rather than commute, for if they do, they lose rights to cultivate family land.

Where "border industry" (in the white area adjoining a reserve) jobs are available, African women are usually hired for the lowest paid ones or are paid less than men for the same job; in some cases the cost of commuting may be too great to warrant taking up employment. In any case, border industry jobs pay far less than the same jobs in urban centres, and the hours and amenities are worse.

the cities or white farm areas. However, the difficulties have been considerably reduced by refusing, in most circumstances, to allocate land to women.

By law, allotments may be made to any married person or *kraal*/head, and "kraal/head" is defined to include a widow or unmarried woman with family obligations. However, allocation of land is an administrative act and cannot be challenged in a court of law. Among women seeking an allotment, it appears that only a widow with children has any chance — and usually she will receive only half the allocation made to a married man.

While man's allotment reverts to commonage on his death, his widow is by law entitled to continue to occupy it as long as she does not remarry or leave his homestead. Thus, if she wants to try another means of supporting her family which requires her to leave home, she must forfeit her right to return to her husband's land if the alternative fails.

Due to an historical accident, a few women are registered holders of quitrent land. Every female holder has the same proprietary rights as a male holder except that, if married, she must have her husband's consent to dispose of the land. No woman can now acquire quitrent land, whether by purchase or inheritance — including the daughter of a female holder. Quitrent land cannot be devised by will. It descends according to rules of male primogeniture, which presumably codify a universalized form of tribal tradition. The widow of a deceased quitrent land holder may occupy and use her late husband's land until she remarries or leaves his homestead.

As a consequence, despite desperate poverty, only 13.6 per cent of all potential rural African women workers are employed at remunerative labour. Those who do work are likely to be employed as farm labourers or as domestic servants on white-owned farms near the reserves (usually while their husbands or fathers are employed on the farms) or as daily domestics, laundresses and the like in the few white cities which abut certain reserves. These are the worst paid jobs available to blacks.

Only a handful of African nurses and teachers ever manage to break out of the depressing occupational mold for rural African women. Even the few who do are usually paid rates far below their city sisters in the same jobs.

The typical "fortunate" woman in the reserves is probably the "housewife" whose husband is working in the city while she attempts to feed their children (and possibly some other dependants) on the crops she cultivates in the small eroded family plot, if any, and the meagre amounts, if any, remitted by her husband. This housewife lives out her lonely life, unable to leave, in a community composed largely of

women, children and the aged and infirm who have been endorsed out of the cities once their productive years were finished.

Lest the picture of life in the reserves seem unduly harsh, it should be noted that G.F. van Froneman, a Nationalist Party spokesman on so-called Bantu Administration and Development, made the following statement before Parliament in 1968:

"If the Bantu is not doing anything here [i.e. the "white areas"], he may just as well go there [i.e. the reserves] and stay there. We settle many elderly people . . . There are many Bantu children here who do nothing . . . They do not work at all. They may just as well go and stay in their homelands and do nothing."

A typical less fortunate woman in the reserves has been "resettled" there when her family — owners of a small farm in a "black spot" or labour tenants or squatters on a white farm — was evicted and forced to go to an already overcrowded reserve. There, with rare exceptions, they are not eligible for any grazing or farm land, but may rent a tiny lot with either a one- or two-roomed hut on it or a tent, until such time as they can erect their own shelter. If the head of the family is lucky, he has permission to go back to the "white areas" to work as a transient labourer. If not, he may get a job in connexion with

AFRICAN WOMEN IN URBAN AREAS

African women in urban areas are subject to the same disabilities as women in the reserves. However, the forms and the effect of discrimination differ from place to place.

Up-country African women in the rural slums are separated geographically from their husbands and fathers, who spend their productive years in urban barracks. Urban women are separated culturally. This type of separation has proved somewhat less significant to African women in the cities, where no force can prevent them from making the adaptations necessary to survive in a non-tribal environment. However, the incongruity of a pseudoarchaic culture in the urban centres of South Africa has not prevented proponents of *apartheid* from continuing to subject urban women to a number of the disabilities imposed on women in the reserves. Some of these disabilities are examined below.

Residence disabilities in urban areas

The right of Africans to reside in the urban areas is largely determined by two laws — the Bantu Labour Act and the so-called Urban Areas Act — and by the myriad regulations issued under them. Section 10(i) of the Urban Areas Act, the basic

the resettlement centre at a rate far below urban pay for the same work, while his wife or daughters may get "make-work" at a fraction of his wages. Many resettlement centres are areas so barren and unproductive that the older inhabitants of the reserves have avoided them. In some such communities, women may spend nearly the whole day collecting firewood or carrying water from the nearest river or bore-hole, just to carry on their day-to-day existence.

The lack of job opportunities in the reserves and the consequent poverty leads inevitably to sickness and death. Kwashiorkor, scurvy, pellagra and beriberi are rife, and deaths resulting from starvation are repeatedly recorded. Tuberculosis and other diseases associated with malnutrition are widespread. The South African Government claims that it has no mortality or morbidity figures for Africans — it does for all other South Africans — but the Progressive Party has claimed that in some reserves, one out of every two African children dies before the age of five; and special studies suggest that the infant mortality rate in certain reserves may be as high as 250:1,000. In 1960 the life expectancy of an African was estimated to be 44-46 years, while that of a white person was between 65 and 72 years. Thus in the reserves, where poverty is worst, black women who survive childbirth find that the chances of their being widowed and seeing their children die, or be frequently stunted or deficient as the result of under-nourishment are greatly enhanced.

provision relating to residence in the urban areas, prohibits any African from remaining in an urban area more than 72 hours unless he is in possession of a permit to remain or he otherwise qualifies under the section to remain without a permit.

Three classes of Africans are qualified to remain in a specified urban area without a permit (unless they run afoul of innumerable other restrictions). They are:

(a) any African who has resided in the area continuously since birth;

(b) any African who has worked continuously in the area for one employer for at least 10 years or who has lived continuously in the area for at least 15 years, continues to live there, and is not employed outside the area, and who has not at any time since the commencement of the period been convicted of a crime (minor offences excepted);

(c) the wife, unmarried daughter or son under 18 of any African qualifying under (a) or (b) if she or he entered the area lawfully and ordinarily resides with the qualified African.

Strict enforcement of this section — even when no other restrictions are invoked — makes it far more difficult for African women than for African men to remain in an urban area.

In the first place, no African woman has been able to enter any urban area lawfully for nearly a decade, since it has become official policy not to issue permits to women. Therefore, a woman who entered illegally and has remained without incident for years will be forced to leave whenever the facts are discovered; the expiration of time does not excuse her original offence or create any prescriptive rights. This woman can never qualify under section 10(1)(c), although she may have been married for years to a qualified African; and her chances of obtaining a permit, if she tries to regularize her situation, are virtually nil.

Secondly, relatively few African women can qualify under section 10(1)(a) or (b). The number of women born in an urban area who have lived there continuously without spending disqualifying periods elsewhere — e.g., with relatives in rural areas or attending school in another area — is limited. For example, since Government policy limits secondary school facilities in the urban "locations" (black residential ghettos), women who want their children to receive an education are forced to leave the cities. Similarly, the number of women who qualify by virtue of continuous employment or residence in a specified area is small, since both the employment opportunities and the housing available for women are more limited than for men.

Finally, unmarried daughters originally qualifying under section 10(1)(c) become disqualified when they marry unless they also qualify separately under paragraph (a) or (b) or marry a qualified African man. If a husband lives in a different urban area, and they try to live together there, she will lose any qualifications she may have had under (a) or (b) without necessarily gaining a new one under (c), even if her husband is qualified.

One of the most obvious effects of section 10(1) is, necessarily, to inhibit African women from changing jobs or protesting even the most scandalous wages, hours or working conditions and from seeking improved housing outside the area of their first residence. Another less obvious effect of the section, combined with Government policy in the larger urban areas of limiting each African township or location to members of a single "nation", is to make it increasingly difficult to marry across "national" lines or even across location boundaries.

An African woman who is lawfully in an urban area has just passed the first hurdle. No prospective employer can legally hire her unless she obtains a permit to take the job from the municipal or district labour officer. Such a permit may be refused for reasons sufficiently broad to enable a labour officer to nullify the work prospects of any African he dislikes or wishes to punish administratively. These reasons include:

- not having any of the innumerable other permits;
- being subject to an existing order to leave the area;
- failure to comply with health requirements;
- breaking a prior labour contract;
- likelihood that employment will threaten State or public safety (a provision applicable to "agitators", strikers and the like); and
- lack of adequate housing for the worker.

Conclusion

The origins of the disabilities of African women lie in the matrix of South African history. But the *apartheid* system is responsible for their continuation and accentuation today. South Africa's policy of *apartheid*, which is designed to ensure the permanent subordination of black to white people in the name of "separate development", is also responsible for the sub-African status of African women, making discrimination inevitable and sustaining it against modern trends to end women's disabilities.

These disabilities are deeply rooted in the present system, for as Professor Simon, a noted sociologist, has written:

"Women carry a double burden of disabilities. They are discriminated against on the grounds of both sex and race. The two kinds of discrimination interact and reinforce each other.

"Colour bars retard the process of female emancipation by impeding the progress of the whole race . . . [Equality] can become a reality . . . only when both men and women have become full citizens in a free society." ■

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Women Under Apartheid

Exerpts from a paper presented by the Women's Section of the African National Congress (ANC) at the Sixth Summit Conference of Heads of State and Governments of the Non-Aligned Countries in Havana, Cuba, September 3, 1979.

African women fall at the bottom of the heap in the South African economy. The 1970 census showed that one in every three African workers is a woman. Yet women earned on an average less than half of what African men are paid, and a mere 8% of a white man's average earnings. Over 60% of these African women are employed in the domestic services in white households and as agricultural workers on farms, sectors where no minimum wages are laid down and no unemployment benefits are offered. The 1.25 million African women working in the white households and farms are in fact occupied in extensions of their own traditional "women's role." In both town and country-side, domestic service is the main occupation of African women.

Only those Africans who are considered to be "economically active" can remain in the "white areas." Although by 1970, 25% of all African females were working compared with only 15% in 1960, this does not mean that opportunities were opened up for women. Their work has been in occupations connected with household needs; in food processing or canning works, in garment manufacturing, laundering, and the teaching and nursing professions.

LABOUR EMPLOYMENT ACT

Recently, to enhance the process of Bantustanization, the government has introduced the Labour Employment Act, which prohibits the employment of unregistered workers. This Act stipulates that an employer found with an unregistered employee is liable to a fine of up to R500. This is directed specifically at women who flee from the starvation in the Bantustans to seek jobs in the white households, where they could get jobs even if they are "illegally" in the white areas. This is the culmination of an Act passed in 1973 that forced recruited domestic workers from the reserves to sign a contract that they would live as single women and not get married while working in the towns since they would lose their jobs. Thousands of domestic workers who cannot be registered because they are in towns without satisfying the demands of Section 10 have to go back to the human dumps in the Bantustans.

The triple discrimination and exploitation of women as workers, Africans and females excludes African women from many professions. By 1973 there were no African women lawyers, judges, magistrates, architects, engineers or chemists. African women doctors, university teachers and librarians are a rarity.

UNEMPLOYMENT

"Every weekday morning since January, a 23-year old mother of four, Mrs. Maureen Ntshingila climbs out of bed at 3 o'clock, lights the candles and washes her face and body in cold water. Then she sets off along the dark, cold and sometimes hostile streets of Orlando to catch the first city-bound train out of Soweto. The time: 4:00 am., five hours before the Labour Bureau in Johannesburg's Ply Street opens." (From an article in the Johannesburg newspaper The Rand Daily Mail of July 27, 1979.)

The generally deteriorating state of the South African economy is affecting the Black women more than any other section of the population. The galloping inflation, with the prices of basic commodities including food and coal, is constantly on the rise. The channeling of more and more funds into the military budget has left the country with a staggering 2 million unemployed people, a majority of whom are African women. The developing industries too rely more on advanced technological methods, and as Africans and particularly women are excluded from all skilled labour, they have no place at all in the fast developing labour market. The same article in the Johannesburg paper goes on:

"Practically all women we meet are qualified to live and work in Johannesburg, yet many claim they have attended the bureau every day for over a year without obtaining a job. Nobody knows how many jobless women (Black) there are who need to support themselves and other relatives. In Johannesburg social workers say they are on the increase each month. Redundancy in industry has a lot to do with it. So has the fact that large numbers of school leavers are unable to find employment. A matriculant of 23 said she was willing to work as a domestic servant if she could not find a job."

LABOUR RIGHTS

For those economically active in the "white areas," there are no labour union rights. Historically women were active in the union organizations which by law excluded "pass-bearing Natives" from their membership. When the government enacted a law in 1956 forcing even African women to carry passes, their involvement in trade unions became as restricted as that of African men. The government is trying all forms of manuevers to exclude African women from participating in labour organizations. The recently proposed recommendations of the Wiehann Commission on Labour Relations has excluded domestic and farm workers, a majority of whom are women. So far they have had no pensions, no medical and unemployment benefits.

FORCED REMOVALS

A resolution passed at the 1973 congress of the Afrikaans Studenbond (the youth wing of the ruling racist Nationalist clique) demanded that:

All the Black women and children in the white areas must be shipped back to the homelands and only the men should be left in the white areas for as long as we need them.

The mass removal of people is an attempt to apply the theory of separate development to the reality of a country of interdependent communities. Since the main aim of these removals is to move "surplus population," (that is, non-productive population) it is only another attack on women and children. Well over 50% of the victims of mass removals are women and children. Rather than be relegated to life in the Bantustans, these people often seek alternative accommodation near the urban areas. The result is the emergence of squatter camps all over the country. Supposedly temporary, these camps represent permanent homes for the people who resist forced transference into the Bantustans.

CROSSROADS

Situated some miles outside the city of Cape Town, Crossroads is a living contradiction of the labour policies of the government. Since 1966 an attempt has been made to reduce the number of Africans in the Cape by 5% per year, but instead over the years 1968-1975 the number of workers in industry and commerce has more than doubled, in construction it has trebled, and in the government sector it has more than quadrupled. Along with the contract workers, thousands of their wives and children have come in order to escape the unbearable living conditions in the Bantustans. Wives and children are technically speaking illegal immigrants in the Western Cape and are not permitted to live with the bread winning members of the family. The response has been to erect their own homes in the nearby townships - Crossroads and others.

On June 7, 1978, more than 200 women from the community of Crossroads met to discuss the harassment in and around their camp and the threat of bulldozers destroying their homes. They decided to go to the Bantu (Plural Affairs) Administration Board to present their grievances. On being asked what put them up to this act, they replied in a statement dated Sept. 15, 1978, in answers which could have been given by women in any other part of South Africa who have been victims of the indiscriminately brutal apartheid policies:

"We are hurt. Three-month old babies and eleven-year old children are in jail. In the beginning when we came to Crossroads it was like this, but now it is worse. Now they are putting a low of women and babies in jail...While we are sleeping they woke us up, breaking in our doors. People are imprisoned. Pregnant women and children, including sick people."

WOMEN IN THE RESERVES

Homeland, Bantustan and Reserve all refer to that portion of South Africa which successive governments have designated for Africans. The Bantustans represent 7.6% of the total land of South Africa which is restricted to African ownership, with the rest exclusively reserved for white occupation. The Stallard Commission in 1922 reported that:

"The Native (meaning African) should only be allowed to enter the urban areas, which are in essence the white man's creation, when he is willing to enter and to minister to the needs of the white man and should depart there from when he ceases to minister."

In the white areas only African men can "minister to the needs of the white man" by selling their labour to the industrial and mining magnates at a very cheap price. Thus the "superfluous appendages"-- which is the official term to describe women and children (African) -- have to be thrown into the Bantustans because they have no place within the socio-economic structure of white South Africa. There are 4 million women living in these reserves. Their status is made even more inferior by the numerous laws that are passed and enforced by the puppet chiefs under the cloak of "customary law." The most reactionary and repressive of these laws is the notorious Natal Code (Law 46) of 1887. The code clearly stipulates that a woman is a perpetual minor. She cannot inherit or act as the guardian of her own children. The Minister of Bantu Administration and Development told Parliament that in fact one of the aims of this policy was "to restore women to their rightful place as wife, mother, leader to the position women occupied in the old society." Under this pretext,

African women are placed under humiliating conditions. Recent reports indicate that some of the chiefs "in order to restore moral standards that should prevail in a typical African community" are empowered even to conduct so-called "virgin tests" on young women. In the name of restoring African women to their rightful place in society, restrictions on women are over-emphasized and their role in rural society is distorted.

There are also very few jobs in the reserves for women. The small number of women who can find work in the area are exploited by the big white agricultural farmers, who treat the women like modern slaves. Some women work for up to a period of 14 hours a day, but the payment remains an occasional bag of mealies. With no land to plough, the poverty and misery that result were related by a Catholic priest, Cosmos Desmond, in the following words:

"One look was sufficient to convince me that the reports I had heard had not been exaggerated and there was grinding poverty, squalor and hardship equal to the worst places I had seen. There were families, tiny, one-roomed houses, many with a number of ragged, hungry-looking children or a bent old woman sitting outside. It was not quite true that I could no longer be shocked or disturbed. I was, in particular, by the sight of one tiny baby, a virtual skeleton, unable to make a move or cry, and covered with flies. I have been through the children's wards in African hospitals throughout the country and over the past ten years have seen thousands of starving, dying children. But I doubt whether I have seen anything worse than this. It was as bad as any of the horror pictures from Biafra."



Photo: Soweto Uprising, 1976. Courtesy: Southern Africa, Spring 1980

WOMEN: the family food producers of south africa



While in the past the women of South Africa did much of the day-to-day agricultural work and were subject to their husbands and fathers, they were at least provided with some security by the social system. Today, the burden of farm work borne by women is immeasurably greater; state control of their lives is all-pervasive; and security has quite disappeared. Women are often singlehandedly responsible for producing food for their families and their labour underpins the whole system of migrant labour under Apartheid.

WOMEN IN THE RESERVES

From the strongholds which now comprise the Reserves of South Africa, the rulers of the African peoples conducted, in the 19th century, their wars against imperial conquest. These areas, Zululand, the Transkei and Ciskei, parts of the western and northern Transvaal, and areas of the Orange Free State, were not settled by whites, and were later reserved by the state for Africans who had no right to own land elsewhere. Overcrowding, overgrazing and the imposition of taxes reduced the ability of the people to live off the land and forced the male members of the community to migrate to mining and industrial areas of the country to earn money for food and taxes. The majority of the women remained behind in the countryside. This sexual discrimination was part of a calculated strategy of exploitation.

At the heart of the Apartheid system a pattern emerged in which the system is subsidized by the domestic labour of women. Mining in South Africa requires large capital outlays to reach gold which lies deep in the earth. To maintain a high rate of profit, the mine workers have always been paid extremely low wages, consistently below the Poverty Datum Line; i.e., not enough for basic subsistence. The mine owners can get away with these low wages only because the women and children of the workers live in the Reserves and provide their own subsistence.

The workers' wages thus do not have to cover rent and food and clothes for their families. The families are just barely able to survive and the sons, as they grow up, succeed their fathers as workers in the mines. Growing food on the Reserves to supplement the wages of the male migrant labourers, the women endure a life of heavy toil and long hours, daily carrying water, gathering fuel and providing other necessities of life in their homes as well.

The oppression of women in the Reserves consists not only of their hard physical labour for long hours in the fields and within the homestead, for small benefit to themselves. There is also the emotional stress of living apart from their husbands, lovers and fathers and having to bring up their children alone. Women are also harassed by the state, which allows them to visit their families in town only with passes, dictating even the number of hours they may stay on their visits.

There are two groups of women agricultural workers in South Africa: the women who are not employed for wages but who live and work in the Reserves, usually without their menfolk, who have gone away as migrant labourers; and the women who work for wages on the large farms and estates. Since the lives of these two groups of women agricultural workers differ from each other, we shall first look at the overall conditions of each group and then show something of what these conditions mean in human terms.

The regime administers, according to the dictates of the Apartheid policy, the land on which the women live. This has meant in recent years that family or common land may be lost through the proclamation of resettlement areas or the enforcement of enclosures. Women's inferior legal status makes their plight even more precarious as it further limits their right to own property in the absence of a father, husband or son. Likewise their limited right of access to livestock deprives them of draught animals and of an important source of subsistence.

Not only are many women left on their own to look after families, but these families form a large proportion of that growing minority who are without plots or herds. The women of the Reserves also suffer from the illness and death of their children from diseases produced by poverty and starvation.

In the Reserves of South Africa some of the longest and most intense struggles against racist rule have been waged. Throughout the 1950s the men and women of South Africa resisted the application of pass laws to women. These laws were intended to document and control the movement of women wherever they sought to live and work. One of the best-known struggles of this campaign took place in 1957 in the country district of Zeerust where men and women burned the passes issued to women. This resistance, born out of the bitterness of women's life under Apartheid, spurred on the national protests against the pass laws from passive resistance to strikes.

Around 1960 a war was fought in the Transkei and Zululand against the imposition of the Bantu Authorities Act, which tightened state control over the Reserves. In that struggle the peasants were armed and women, by far the majority of the peasant population, participated in the revolt. They provided food for the fighters, warned of the approach of police and army and symbolically supported the uprising by wearing black to indicate the country was in mourning because of the war.

Elsewhere, unpopular decrees about cattle culling, fencing, allocation of land and, worse still, forced removal, have frequently provoked organized response at the grassroots in defiance of these edicts. Numerous women have opposed the police and been prepared to go to prison rather than submit to enforcement or removal from their lands.

WOMEN WAGE EARNERS IN AGRICULTURE

In the 20th century agricultural production in South Africa has come to be based less and less on small peasant holdings and more and more on very large farms and estates. The white farms and estates need men and women workers on a seasonal basis at harvest time and other periods of intensive work, while the demand for permanent employees is decreasing.

This need for casual labour has been increasingly met by women. In 1936 there were only 3 112 women employed as farm workers while in 1960 there were 149 893. By 1970 the number had risen to 450 000 compared with 900 000 men working as farm labourers.

In South Africa, as elsewhere, men tend to be more highly paid, even when women do the same work. As farm labour is amongst the lowest paid categories of work, men who have the choice tend to sell their labour elsewhere. The casual labour of weeding or picking is the lowest paid of all, so it falls to women who cannot support their families through their labour in the Reserves or who have lost their land completely. Women now predominate amongst casual labourers in white agriculture as a whole.

Women farm labourers are paid extremely low wages. In 1973 the average wage paid to farm labourers was 11.50 rand per month and most women probably get less. Moreover, in many areas of South Africa casual wages are often paid in maize meal or in part of the fruit or other crop picked.

During the periods of their employment on farms or on sugar, forest, fruit or wine estates most women agricultural workers are separated from their families and work long hours. The employers of casual workers are not subject to labour legislation on minimum wages or length of day worked. The excuse for the low wages paid to farm workers - that their families are supported not by their part but by the labour of their kin in the Reserves - is becoming less and less true. Especially in the case of women casual labourers, this wage may be the only means of family subsistence. Because of her double oppression, a woman's wage is less than a man's and is often so low she has to seek help from older women in maintaining her family and caring for children. The rationale used by the white farmers is just a convenient excuse for paying such abysmal rates to a large part of the casual labour force, which in turn serves to keep down all wages.

CONCLUSION

The South African state does all it can to control the lives of men and women who live and work in the countryside. Migrant labourers can be paid minimum wages because of the unpaid work in the countryside of their mothers, sisters and wives. Agriculture has brought large profits to the landowners of South Africa because of the toil of men and women farm labourers.

But there is also a long history of resistance to this system. The struggle unfolds both in periods of intense conflict, in strikes and confrontations with the police and army, and as men and women develop strategies of opposition in the comradeship of everyday life, in self-help associations, church groups and political organization.

And, just as the labour of women in rural South Africa is at the root of the Apartheid system of exploitation, so women can be seen at the forefront of opposition to it. They may be strained, exhausted and hungry yet they fully realize their political and economic situation and are prepared to declare their power. They showed this when, at the height of the anti-pass campaign, they said to the Prime Minister:

"Now you have touched the women,
You have struck a rock,
You have dislodged a boulder,
You will be crushed!"

MIGRANT WIDOWS

Most migrant workers are employed in jobs which pay low wages - in public works, railways, mining, refuse collecting, brick yards, docks, steelworks and even grave digging. In 1974, of the men I knew, those who were employed by some City Council as cleaners or park hands earned between 30 and 35 rand per month, those in the railways 30 - 45 rand, according to length of service and overtime. The main construction firms were paying 38 rand with an annual increase of one rand. From this pay packet the migrant worker has to maintain himself - pay rent, food, transport, clothes and send something to his family for maintenance, insurance premiums. More of this later; first let us have a look at a day in his life.

a typical day



He gets up at 4 a.m. He stands in the queue for his turn to wash. The queue is usually long at this time and more often than not he leaves the hostel without having washed.

There is no breakfast for him. Outside where he works are women selling some kind of fat-cakes known as *magwinya*. These are easy to eat without tea, so he purchases four or five at tea time. For lunch he has a cold lump of mealie-pap, *molatswa*, which is left over from the previous night.

After work he rushes 'home'. Getting into the train carrying Africans is a feat both physical and mental. At the hostel is a long queue for a place at the stove to cook his meal. By the time he sits down to his meal he is thoroughly exhausted. He has been literally fighting it out the whole day, like an animal. But perhaps the night will bring him rest? This is what awaits him:

The utensils need cleaning. He goes out into the street where there is a communal water tap, if he doesn't want to push and fight again for the kitchen scullery. A bath before he goes to bed? Not for him. There are communal showers with no hot water, whatever the season. He shares his open room with 15 other men, irrespective of age. Washing facilities are primitive: communal toilets with rows of buckets next to each other. He watches some desperate men practising homosexuality and prostitution openly. To add to this, police with torches may break noisily into the room looking for women who have been smuggled in, disguised. How long can a migrant worker stand this?

His reaction to this dehumanized life is not surprising. Within a week or a month he will have to find a way out. Along the street dividing the hostels from the residential houses are the women selling *magwinya*, sweet potatoes, etc. There are also houses near the hostels where food and drinks are sold in home-like surroundings. These places give comfort to the migrant worker. Soon he becomes an unofficial member of the family or an unofficial son-in-law. But the pay packet of 30 or 40 rand is definitely not enough for two families - and it is the family in the far-away homeland that suffers. To help out some men take up odd jobs on Saturdays and Sundays - gardening in the townships or in the towns, for whites. This helps them to get train-fare money for the week. Such jobs pay them one to one-and-a-half rand a day. Some become open-air barbers, others cobblers. They never rest - small wonder their life expectation is 35 years.

the impact on the women

The life of a migrant worker at his place of work and at the hostel has a direct influence on the life of his wife and family in the Bantustan. As will be seen in a later article the possibilities of agricultural production in these reserves are very limited, because: (a) they are over-crowded; (b) they are mostly arid and to make them productive would require much capital; and (c) hoes are almost the only instruments used. Circular 25 of 1967 from the Secretary for Bantu Administration to Bantu Commissioners instructed them not to allow Africans to rear stock, as there was not enough land even for human settlement. So the majority of families cannot use ploughs. In the thirties, forties and even the early fifties an ox-pulled or donkey-pulled plough was a common sight; a woman holding the plough, a boy of eight or ten driving the team and a girl of seven or eight sowing behind the plough. These are rare today.

The women wait anxiously for money from their husbands or sons in town. This money hires a government tractor at one pound per acre. The same money buys seed, food, pays burial society premiums, local taxes (for local administration, building dams, or chief's transport expenses), the school building fund, school fees, books and school-uniforms. The higher the class the child is in, the more expensive it is to keep the child at school. On top of these are the food and clothes items. In 1975 a 50-kilo bag of maize-meal cost 4 to 5 rand at a mill or maize-meal dealer in Pretoria and Johannesburg, but it cost 7 to 8 rand at Malamulele, Vendlan and Leboa. A loaf of white bread cost 3 to 4 cents higher. Fruit and fresh vegetables are hard to get; if available, they are astronomically high in price. As a result it is starchy food all round. Fresh milk is out of the question. The whole country is in the grip of malnutrition. All these problems beset women in the Bantustan.

To make ends meet, for the money from Johannesburg comes irregularly and in decreasing amounts, the women have to take up jobs. The question is what jobs? In the Transkei, an 'independent' Bantustan, and the most developed of all, women can be seen working on the roads - digging and carrying stones and pushing wheelbarrows full of earth or gravel - or making bricks. At Gazankulu women take contracts to make bricks, building ovens and burning wood and dry manure until the bricks are red. They are employed even in building walls using unburnt bricks. They do all this in addition to their own chores. The money they get maintains the home. Some become domestic servants to the local middle class - teachers and other government servants, as well as business people. But working for masters who themselves get low pay does not bring security. They are paid more in kind than in cash. Wages are from 5 to 8 rand per month.

Some choose other means. They fry magwinya and sell at bus stops, dipping tanks, at clinics the day the doctor visits, for people wait long hours for him. They also sell to pensioners the day the Bantu Commissioner comes to pay out pension money. Selling to a community which is poor does not bring much profit. In Vendlan where there are irrigated gardens, on important days it is common to find Venda women squatting in the hot sun with shrivelled cabbage or spinach for sale. A stray traveller might buy one, the rest go back home. Fruit such as bananas, mangoes and pawpaws, as well as oranges, also go to the local market. Those who grow these do not eat them, they want them bought so that with the money they can meet all their other needs. Others buy the fruit to sell at a profit of one or two cents.

resettlement and women

What have the removals and uprootings of whole communities meant to women in the Bantustans?

The Makuleke people lived for more than a century in a well-watered country in the Limpopo-Lebyubye river valley. Like all Shangaan, their staple food was mabele and millet; unlike maize, one could get at least a bag or so even in a bad year. They had plenty of water. They had plenty of wild fruit, guinea-fowl and buck. They ate a lot of river fish and drank healthy yucema (palm wine). The liberation war in Rhodesia and

Mozambique caused the government to uproot this community to an arid, reclaimed game reserve, where only mozane worms flourish. They learnt to eat these worms.

With men away in towns the Government and demolishers' vehicles did their job and women found themselves struggling to build houses during the winter months. Poles and grass were not available. Winter months passed into spring and into rainy summer. They hoed their gardens but the harvest was nil. Nothing at all. The following year, rain drowned the young crops. The third year heat scorched the crops - you could set fire to them. For four successive years there was nothing to reap. Death ravaged the settlement. In the fifth year there was some promise of a good year. But wild beasts, especially buffaloes, baboons, monkeys and buck, as well as hares, caused complete destruction. Those who set traps to catch them were jailed for five years and more. They were told they should have reported and asked the white Bantu Commissioners to go and shoot these beasts. The beasts ravage at night and the white commissioners are hundreds of kilometres away!

At Sibasa in Vendlan the resettlement (or rather, removal) was caused by bad physical planning. People had been resettled in the wrong place and within a year they had to be removed again. Grass for thatch is hard to get. Taking the old thatch along breaks the grass, and using it again means a leaky roof. The Venda women, sitting in front of their half-thatched huts with no fire, no shelter for their pit latrines, no privacy whatsoever, were indeed a pitiful sight.

services in the rural areas

This picture of women's life in the Bantustan would not be complete if we leave out the water problem. Much noise is made about boreholes and irrigation dams which are 'turning deserts into gardens'. A borehole can only be useful if it strikes a vein or stream. Some of the boreholes run dry at Makuleke in Giantreef, at Matiane - places where news reporters are not allowed - and women have to travel as far as six kilometres for water. They balance about 20 to 25 litres on their heads and carry in their hands 5 litres to drink along the way. Irrigation dams are for watering cash crops belonging to the Government.

At Mdavula, Northern Transvaal, a demonstrator organized people - mostly women and old men - to dig out the dry bed of a stream so that, when the rain came, the water would not flow away. After two rainy months the water was full in the dam. Then came a dry season, women were allowed to climb wooden steps up the dam wall and then down to the water. The tadpoles! The whole dam was black with them. Even using a spoon to scoop water you would scoop up a dozen live tadpoles! There was nothing else to do but carry these tadpoles along and strain the water before drinking.

woman's changing role

Women's role in the Bantustans has evolved from life as a household worker pure and simple to one that combines that role with a broader economic function. They now wield authority - all authority, in the long absence of their husbands. They contribute economically to the wealth of the home. Can a man who contributes little or nothing in the home still hold sway over his wife and children? Both his wife and children have learnt to live without him. To his children he is associated with money parcels. He is a stranger to them, an 'uncle' to use the colloquial language of the townships.

Just as a man finds the strain of separation from his wife unbearable, the woman who remains in the Bantustans has to undergo a similar strain. The result is women are 'looked after' by the few men, especially teachers, businessmen, extension workers, who are in the Bantustans. As a result, families break up completely, others exist only in name. Often there are unwanted births. This used to be an embarrassment but now it is considered as just part of life under Apartheid.

reprinted from Ideas and Action
Bulletin 126, 1978, Food and Agriculture Organization of the U.N., Rome.

South African Black Women Organize: 1913-1977

Whereas political organizations of white women in South Africa, such as the Suffragette Campaign and the Black Sash, have tended to be historically isolated and fragmented, the position with black women's movements is somewhat different, largely, I think, because their organization has always been a response to their own experienced material reality. From the 1913 OFS pass resistance, through the ANC (African National Congress) Women's League (ANCWL), the Food Committees of the 1940's to the Federation of South African Women (FSAW) and even to the Black Women's Federation of the 70's, these were not women talking abstractly of rights and morality, but women very really and specifically threatened on the basis of their class, their race and their sex.

The struggle of black women in South Africa must be seen in the context of the struggle of all blacks against successive oppressive governments, and as part of the African National Movement. Although their protest was often motivated directly by provisions which related specifically to women, it was black women who were threatened and there seems always to have been an understanding that these provisions were tightly linked to the oppression of all blacks.

Thus the successful demonstration of the African women in the Orange Free State in 1913 against the enforcement of the pass laws against them in that province (elsewhere only men had to carry passes) should be seen in the context of the 1913 Land Act which forced many Africans off the land into the urban areas, and in the context of the formation of the ANC in 1912.

1943: Women Get Vote in ANC

This action of the women of the OFS (Orange Free State) played a part in the founding of the women's section of the ANC in 1918. Charlotte Maxeke, founder of the section, was aroused by the 1913 struggle and strongly advocated a women's league. Nevertheless, until 1943 women in the ANC did not have voting rights and were largely there to cater for conferences. Indeed, the early ANC leaders, products of an extremely patriarchal tradition, were far more concerned with acquiring full partnership in a male parliamentary democracy than in acquiring full rights for all the men and women of South Africa.

Clearly, then, black women were oppressed in a unique way; as blacks they were subject to the discriminations and deprivations applied to their race, as black women the discriminations and deprivations were given a peculiar twist, and as women in a patriarchal society they were further discriminated against.

It should be noted that the great majority of black women were also members of a labouring class and hence discriminated against in class terms too. The Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) was an important influence in politicizing black women in the first half of the century. Within the ANC it was racial politicization which took predominance. In the CPSA it was a class politicization. Although in both cases women were seen as auxiliary rather than equal to men, in the face of the common ground of class and/or race solidarity, the sexual antagonism took a very secondary place.

Interesting enough, one of the first signs of the possibility of an organized women's political movement on a broader and more independent base than that of the ANCWL sprang directly from the sex-role stereotyping that makes the domestic sphere exclusively a woman's concern. This was the development of the Food Committees during the food crisis of the 1940's. This was a vital and immediate issue for a broad range of women, affecting all women, of whatever race or class, except, perhaps, the very richest. The Food Committees grew out of the queues which formed at the government sponsored mobile food vans which supplied scarce food commodities. At this stage the great majority of women in South Africa were not what the census terms "economically active" and the contact provided by the queues must have been an important stimulus, at a grassroots level, to concerted action for women usually separated by an atomized and often isolated way of life.

Even the National Council of Women (NCW), a determinedly "apolitical" body, supported the Food Committees in Johannesburg and Cape Town until the Food Committee Organization began to realize that the issues went far beyond protesting (successfully) against the removal of the food vans, and demanding (unsuccessfully) that rationing be introduced. The black women, in particular, began to look at the pass system and the unionization of black workers, and, recognizing their powerlessness, began to voice their demands for the vote which they saw as the necessary "key to the food cupboard."

The 1940's also saw the final breakdown of the reserve economy and tribal authority and a rapid migration of African women to the towns, leading to the legislation of the '50's to control the influx. It was also a period in which the CPSA was active among women in trade unions and in the food committees, and, after 1943 when the ANC made a commitment to universal rather than male suffrage, a period of revival for the ANCWL. Many black women participated in the 1952 Defiance Campaign and demonstrated clearly that women could play an active and central role in the struggle for liberation.

The passing in 1952 of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act and the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act extended the apparatus of apartheid control to African women who now had to have permits issued by local municipalities in order to live and work in the towns and had also to carry reference books. The 1950's saw resistance to these measures from a wide range of women: peasant women in the reserves, workers in urban areas, intellectuals and middle-class women.

The scene had been set in the '40's and early '50's for the development of a specifically women's political organization in which the general liberatory struggle would take precedence but which would also reflect the growing consciousness of many women that the removal of racial and even class discrimination would not remove all the disabilities to which they as women were subject. Thus, when a circular went out in 1954 inviting women to a "national meeting at which women of all races will come together to discuss women's disabilities, and to promote women's rights", it met with an enthusiastic response.

FSAW: Grassroots, Militant

At the inaugural conference of the FSAW (Federation of South African Women) on April 17, 1955, in Johannesburg, a wide cross section of women were present from Bettie du Toit of the Garment Workers Union to Helen Joseph of the

Congress of Democrats and Lilian Ngoyi of the ANCWL. The majority of the women were black, many had a background in trade unions and were mostly married with children. The organizations which they came from were the ANC, the SAIC (South African Indian Congress), the COD (Congress of Democrats), the SACPO (South African Coloured People's Organization) and the trade unions. Those organizations not represented included the Non-European Unity Movement, the NCW (National Council of Women), the Liberal and all other white political parties. Over the years the FSAW attempted to include the Black Sash, the NCW and the Liberal Party, but the best they achieved was limited cooperation on specific issues.

Nevertheless, through the affiliate organizations, the FSAW represented many thousands of women, and, even if white membership through the COD was small, it still gave to the FSAW a mass grassroots support and a militant ethos, and although not feminist in the sense of challenging the family (on the contrary, the strength of their passion arose out of the threat posed to families by the apartheid system), and although they accepted the priority of the national struggle, nevertheless, they were very aware of the special disabilities of blacks who were also women. "We the women of South Africa ... hereby declare our aim of striving for the removal of all laws and regulations, conventions and customs, that discriminate against us as women, and that deprive us in any way of our inherent right to the advantages, responsibilities and opportunities that society offers to any one section of the population." (Preamble to Charter of FSAW.)

The aims of the FSAW as articulated in the Report of the First Conference, while they emphasize the national liberation movement (e.g. "to participate in the struggles of the working and oppressed peoples for the removal of class and race discrimination and for full equal citizen rights"), also express the need to "bring about emancipation of women from the special disabilities suffered by them and strive for a genuine South African democracy based on complete equality and friendship between men and women and between each section."

1955: Demands Listed

In preparation for the Congress of the People in 1955, the FSAW issued a list of demands which included demands for four months maternity leave on full pay for working mothers, birth control clinics, the right of all women to vote and serve on legislative bodies, and equal rights with men in property, in marriage, and in the guardianship of children. Although they clearly would not have fought for these demands at the expense of the demands for national liberation, that they were articulated at all by a predominantly black, working class, middle-aged movement, by women coming from a tradition dominated by conservative, patriarchal attitudes, is evidence of a wakening consciousness and independent strength among the women.

In the decade in which it functioned, the FSAW concentrated on issues such as rent increases, Bantu Education, Group Areas Act, and, most of all, on the issue of passes for women, an anti-pass campaign.

As we have seen, the decline in the reserves and the consequent influx of women into the cities, with its potential towards permanent urbanization of black workers, led to the extension of influx control regulations to black women. Women reacted sharply to this move which threatened them and

their families in a double sense-- firstly, for those who had families starving in the reserves, it threatened to shut the escape gate to the urban areas and possible employment; secondly, it was an obvious tool for controlling those who were working in the urban areas. Although the women also (and with some justification) thought it would open them up to abuse at the hands of policemen, and as Lillian Ngoyi said, "If the husband is to be arrested, and the mother, what about the child?", they seem to have had a clear understanding that this was a move aimed at limiting the mobility of labour and increasing its vulnerability.

It was against this background that the FSAW organized a demonstration of 2000 women outside the Union Buildings in Pretoria in 1955, and another of up to 20,000 on the 9th of August 1956. Talking of the preparation for the second demonstration, Helen Joseph said: "For the first time in their whole political history [those serious, responsible Congress men of the Eastern Cape] fell in behind the women."

Walter Sisulu, an ANC leader, is said to have asked after the first demonstration: "How could they dare?" and, over the next 5 years, the women were to dare often, sometimes as part of organized demonstrations and sometimes spontaneously.

In March 1956 a group of women at Winburg in the OFS burned their passes. In 1958 when passes began to be issued to Johannesburg domestic workers, a spontaneous defiance campaign was started and then taken up by the FSAW and the ANCWL, against the wishes of the ANC who did not think the FSAW was strong enough to succeed in such a campaign. The FSAW proposed a target of 20,000 women in jail, but the ANC did not think it had the organizational strength to achieve this and, moreover, it "was under pressure from rank and file men to allow the women to be released either through bail or payment in fines," for, if the women were in jail, who was to take care of the children and prepare the meals? Although the ANCWL and the FSAW, reluctantly, accepted the decision of the ANC, the senior partner of the Congress Alliance, that the campaign should be called off, it did make enough of a mark for the Star to come out with a story headlined "No Nannies Today."

1959 saw the Cato Manor uprising in Natal. According to Yawitch, the reasons behind this were poor living conditions and general poverty, and the flashpoint came with exhaustive beer-raids on illegal stills. The municipal beer-halls, and the ban on private brewing that went with them, directly threatened one of the few economic roles still open to women in rural areas. Yawitch sees the consequent action against the beer-halls, which involved not only shebeen queens, but also members of the ANCWL and ordinary women who saw the beer-halls as thieves of their men and their money, as an instance of feminine solidarity. When their grievances were published, they went far beyond the beer-halls to include dipping tanks, betterment schemes, increased taxes, influx control and police provocation.

The example of the Cato Manor Women was taken up by the women of other areas with very little support from the men. Yawitch suggests that this was because 1958/9 was a recession year and the men were afraid of losing their jobs. In the end this particular area of unrest involved nearly 20,000 women of whom 1,000 were convicted.

1960: Sharpeville Violence

As with the antipass campaigns, the women had led the way, and the FSAW at any rate now awaited with impatience some leadership and direction from the men. De Villiers suggests that it was largely pressure from the women that led the ANC finally to a commitment to the pass issue, and thus, to Sharpeville on March 23, 1960 (a massacre of blacks by white police).

The political trials, bannings and general clamp down on opposition that followed Sharpeville put an end to the intense wave of women's activity of the fifties. Although white women had been involved in the activities of the FSAW, on the whole the movement and campaigns it organized or supported were almost wholly black and working class, and the nascent feminism transcended racial and class barriers more in theory than in practise. Since then, political organization of black women has suffered the same suppression as that of other organizations radically opposed to capitalist apartheid. For instance, the Black Women's Federation, begun in December 1975, was banned on the infamous October 19, 1977, and many of its leaders were banned as well (e.g., Fatima Meer and Winnie Mandela).

As an organization, the Black Women's Federation opposed Bantu Education, supported the Soweto students, rejected the homelands and the three tier parliamentary system and saw as priorities aid to squatter camps and child-care in the townships.

It seems, thus, to have followed the women's movements of the fifties in accepting a specifically female sphere, while demanding the right to incorporate that sphere as an equally important one, and themselves as equally important fighters in the struggle for liberation. This may not be feminism as it is understood in the ranks of the Women's Movement but it does, I suggest, indicate a rising level of consciousness and a potential feminism.

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This article appeared originally in From Women, a feminist newsletter from Cape Town, South Africa.

Demonstration outside the Treason Trial Court, Johannesburg 1956



Photo by Eli Weinberg

Demonstrator, Soweto, 1976



Photographer unknown

The Life of Winnie Mandela



Winnie Mandela with her daughter Zindzi.

Winnie Mandela is a leading light among South African women activists. Her life stands as an example both of the ruthless persecution that the South African regime brings down on people who refuse to bow to its tyranny and of the undaunted spirit that continues to oppose that regime. Winnie Mandela has been imprisoned and her movements have been restricted time and again, although she has never been convicted of any crime except for technical violations of her banning orders. Her moments of liberty have been very brief, but they have shown her to be steadfast in her conviction.

Nomzamo Winnie Mandela was born in 1934 and grew up in a rural area. Moving to Johannesburg, she earned a diploma in social science and became a social worker.

In 1958 she married Nelson Mandela, a leader of the ANC. Later that year she participated along with hundreds of other African women in a demonstration against passbooks. Although pregnant at the time, Mrs. Mandela was arrested and had to spend two weeks in jail.

In 1960 the ANC was banned and Nelson Mandela went underground. He was arrested a year later and has remained in prison ever since. He is serving a life sentence at the infamous Robben Island Prison.

BANNED

On January 28, 1963, Winnie Mandela was served with a two-year banning order. This meant that she could not leave the Johannesburg area, attend meetings, or communicate with other banned persons. Special permission was required for her to visit her husband.

Two years later, a stricter five-year banning order was issued. Now Winnie Mandela could not leave the Orlando area of Soweto. She was not allowed to enter any school or publishing house. She lost her job as a social worker.

In 1966 Mrs. Mandela was granted permission to visit her husband on Robben Island with the condition that she travel by train to Cape Town. Finding the train full, she took a plane instead so that she could reach her husband before the permit expired. As a result, she was charged with violating her banning order and sentenced to 14 months imprisonment, all but 4 days suspended. This is just one example of the arbitrary and inhuman rules imposed by the apartheid regime.

POLITICAL PRISONERS TORTURED

In May 1969, Winnie Mandela was arrested along with 40 others under the Internal Security Act. She spent the next 491 days in detention, most of it in solitary confinement, although she was not charged with any crime. Two of the detainees, a Moslem leader and a trade union leader, died during interrogation in prison.

In October, 1969, Winnie Mandela and 21 other African detainees were charged with furthering the activities of the ANC. Mrs. Mandela stated that she had been cruelly interrogated for five days and five nights despite a heart condition. Other detainees testified that they had been tortured.

The court acquitted all the accused in February, 1970. However, they were immediately re-detained under the Terrorism Act, which empowers the police to hold people indefinitely. Nationwide protests greeted this act. In June of that year, Winnie Mandela and 19 others were charged under the Terrorism Act. They were acquitted once again in September.

Only two weeks later, Mrs. Mandela was again banned for 5 years and placed under house arrest from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. on weekdays and from 2 p.m. to 6 a.m. on weekends and holidays. She was arrested three times in the next few years and convicted of violating her banning orders with charges such as receiving visits from one of her sisters who came to help her when she was sick.

Family and friends of Winnie Mandela have been harassed in connection with visits made to her or for refusing to speak against her. Her sister, Nomyamise Madikizela, was held in solitary confinement and threatened with 10 years in prison if she refused to testify against her.

BLACK PRIDE AND UNITY

Winnie Mandela was free from September, 1975 to August, 1976—her one period of liberty since 1962. She spoke out courageously for South African liberation at that time. After the Soweto revolt of June, 1976, she was active in founding and leading the Black Parents Association (BPA). In a speech at the founding of the BPA Winnie Mandela called for black pride and black unity against the oppressors.

"It is only when all black groups join hands and speak with one voice that we shall be a bargaining force which will decide its own destiny. This is the only way in which we shall maintain our oneness. We know what we want, our aspirations are dear to us. We are not asking for majority rule; it is our right, we shall have it at any cost. We are aware that the road before us is uphill, but we shall fight to the bitter end for justice..."

Let us leave this meeting with the spirit of rebirth, of purification from the humiliation of domination. If you are to free yourselves, you must break the chains of oppression yourselves. Only then can we express our dignity; only when we have liberated ourselves can we cooperate with other groups. Any acceptance of humiliation, indignity, or insult is acceptance of inferiority. We have to think of ourselves as men and women. As one quotation goes, 'Once the mind is free, the body will soon be free.'"

BANISHED TO BRANDFORT

Winnie Mandela was arrested again in August, 1976, under the preventive detention clause of the Internal Security Act, used by the government to stifle unrest by removing the leadership. She remained in prison for four months but was never charged. After her release in December, she was served with a five-year banning order.

Justice Minister Kruger then decided that 'it was better to have her out of Soweto at the present time.' She believes she was chosen as a scapegoat for the Soweto uprising. In May, 1977, she was arrested and driven 200 miles to the small town of Brandfort. She lives there with her teenage daughter, Zindzi, the youngest of her 4 children, far from friends and relatives, restricted to meeting with no more than one person at a time. The people of the town are afraid to talk to her. She is unable to find work and has to live on a small pension. She is constantly watched by the police.

While in Brandfort, in 1977, Winnie Mandela was charged with the 'crime' of having taken part in a conversation about a chicken in the presence of two other people, and with unlawfully receiving visitors — who came to see her daughter. The courtroom overflowed with supporters at her trial. She received international attention and support as well. She was given a six months' suspended sentence. Police had to disperse a spontaneous demonstration of support on the day the sentence was pronounced.

STAY AND FIGHT

The South African government has stated that it would not stop Winnie Mandela from leaving for exile. However, she is dedicated to remaining in her country and fighting for change. As she said, 'If anyone should leave, it is not me, it's the settler government.'

Apartheid and the United States

WHAT DOES WINNIE MANDELA HAVE TO DO WITH US?

We in the United States are connected in very real ways to the lives and struggles of Winnie Mandela and other women in South Africa. Corporations benefit from racism in the United States and South Africa alike. Employers encourage and use racism and sexism to divide workers and keep wages low. Blacks and women in the United States are denied equal access to education and jobs. South Africa mirrors a more extreme version of many of the same injustices found in our own country.

CAPITALIST NATIONS PROP UP SOUTH AFRICA

We live in a country which (along with other nations such as Great Britain, France, West Germany, Israel, Canada, and Japan) makes it possible for the South African white regime to survive. These nations provide South Africa with support that is essential for the maintenance of apartheid. They provide markets for South African mineral wealth — gold, diamonds, and uranium. They supply technological know-how, military aid, and nuclear technology. For example, computers provided by IBM and photographic equipment from Polaroid enable the South African government to implement its system of pass laws. Military vehicles manufactured by General Motors are used to put down Black resistance within South Africa. Banks give direct loans to the South African government and to companies operating in South Africa. The United States, United Kingdom, France and other powerful Western nations allow South Africa to survive politically and economically by routinely vetoing United Nations resolutions calling for an economic boycott of South Africa.

UNITED STATES INVESTMENT IN APARTHEID

The United States has had investments in South Africa since long before World War II. Now the United States has \$1.8 billion worth of direct investment in South Africa. While over 400 United States firms have interests in South Africa, the 13 largest account for over three quarters of total United States direct investment there. The 13 play an important role in the United States economy, as they do in South Africa. They are Caterpillar, Chrysler, Firestone, Ford, General Electric, General Motors, Goodyear, IBM, ITT, 3M, Mobile, Texaco and Standard Oil of California and Union Carbide. United States companies also have an unknown amount of indirect investment in South Africa through European firms.

United States banks have approved at least \$3 billion in loans to South Africa in the last 6 years. At the same time, they refuse loans to city and state governments, forcing them to cut back on social services. For example, the First National Bank of Boston has admitted to \$28 million in loans to South Africa, including at least \$14 million directly to the South African government. It has also given loans to the Foxboro Corporation of Massachusetts, enabling it to supply South Africa with nuclear technology. The same banks are being reviewed by the United States Department of Labor for discrimination against women and minorities. It also provides loans to Massachusetts businesses which decide to relocate overseas where labor is cheaper and there are no unions. It denies mortgages in low income areas of Boston and Massachusetts. This is only one of many United States banks with such practices.

Foreign companies enforce apartheid in their daily operations and benefit from the cheap labor apartheid provides. Multinational corporations have been making enormous profits from their investments in South Africa—higher than anywhere else in the world. Many corporations claim that they can change the system of apartheid from within by introducing reforms inside their plants. None of these attempts have had any impact, and Black leaders have stated that the only way for corporations to weaken the system is to withdraw completely.

UNITED STATES INTERVENTION IN SOUTH AFRICA A DANGER

United States interests in South Africa provide the material basis for United States policy toward Southern Africa. Again and again, in Southeast Asia, Chile, Angola, and elsewhere in the world, we have seen that the United States will act militarily either openly or secretly to protect its business interests. United States investment in South Africa brings us dangerously close to becoming involved once again on the wrong side of a people's fight for freedom.

IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Just as international capitalist support is crucial in maintaining the racist South African regime, international support for the liberation struggle in South Africa can make an important difference. In the words of Winnie Mandela:

"I can tell you from my own personal experience over the past 15 years, when I was confined and restricted, that I got my inspiration from the very knowledge that one is not alone. The knowledge that the struggle is an international struggle for the dignity of man and that you are part of this family of man—this alone sustains you. In our particular struggle these outside groups have a tremendous psychological effect on the masses, on us as individuals—just that knowledge alone that we belong to a family of man in a society where we have been completely rejected by a minority."

Already our campaigns in the United States and the progress of the liberation struggles are having an impact on United States investment in South Africa. United States banks and corporations, fearful of losing credibility here and of the consequences of a mass uprising in South Africa, are beginning to ease themselves out of South Africa. More and more universities and organizations, like unions, are divesting from corporations involved in South Africa. But we have to keep the pressure up, for the corporations' decisions are not based on morality, but on their profits.

Reprinted from Black Women in South Africa and the Case of Winnie Mandela, by the Winnie Mandela Solidarity Coalition, c/o BGLSA, Box 8791, Boston, Ma. 02114.

Printing of the original pamphlet was made possible by a grant from the Haymarket People's Fund.

Growing Up in The Era of The Pass Laws

By Mottalepula Chabaku

Mottalepula Chabaku is a founder of the Black Women's Federation of South Africa, an organization whose membership includes Asian and Cape Coloured women as well as blacks; and she also has served as National Secretary for the Women's League of the African National Congress. (Both of these organizations have been outlawed in South Africa.)

Chabaku now lives in North Carolina with her 16-year-old adopted daughter, Mamoleno. A teacher, social worker, and minister, Chabaku continues to work as an organizer for the mass liberation movement and feminist issues specifically, speaking at religious, women's, and human rights conferences around the world.

Recently, Chabaku spoke with "Ms." editors about her own life as a black woman in South Africa.

I was born and brought up on the outskirts of Johannesburg, one of seven children in a very poor family. We lived in a two-room house that was nine-by-ten feet. When our parents first went there, grass was growing on the floor. There were unplastered walls of used bricks with mortar; there was no ceiling, just a corrugated iron roof, and no electricity.

Every evening, my mom and dad would use dirt and water to plaster the walls, similar to what the indigenous people do with their adobe huts in the American West. My mother put on a ceiling by taking burlap and nailing it to the beams that were there. She took ordinary lime, which she mixed herself, and splashed it on the burlap with an old broom. She had to be careful because a little speckle of lime was so strong that it would blind you if it got into your eyes. It was before we had plastic, so she wrapped cloth around a piece of glass and put it over her face so she could still see as the specks dropped on her eyes.

Both my parents went to school because the Lutheran church missionaries of that time allowed African children to go to school up to the sixth grade; then they had to spend a year or two taking confirmation classes in order to be confirmed in the church as full members. And after that, they had to go out and

work for the local white farmer for twelve months, seven days a week, throughout the year, doing domestic work, or working in the fields, only to get a calf at the end of the year as payment.

There were many things that my father used to question. He used to tell me, for instance, how he and others living as very poor black Christians on a German Lutheran mission station—had to collect money for orphans in Germany.

My father worked for a white family for more than twenty-five years as a clerk; he did everything from writing invoices to delivery. He used to make tea for his employers. Although he stuck it out for so long, he never got a pension, was never even acknowledged afterward. We could not live on his salary alone, so my mother took in laundry from whites in the city.

My father used to take a tennis ball and say, "You are like a tennis ball—people can squeeze you, but always bounce back as who you are. They will even try to strike you down, but the harder they want to put you on the ground, the higher you should go up."

I went to an Anglican school, although we were not Anglicans. It was an all-black school in the black ghetto of Johannesburg. Our black teacher was not trained to the same level as a white teacher; we worked from a syllabus specifically designed for blacks, but which did not give us a positive or accurate view of our history. We were ninety to a hundred children, taught by one teacher.

Sometimes my family would not be able to pay school fees, but my mother would always dress me up and say, "Go." And I would go as if I were going to school, and yet I would remain outside the schoolyard for the whole day because if you had not paid school fees, you could not go to class. We did this so our neighbors would not know we could not pay school fees.

In black schools, we could not afford to have janitors, so we kids cleaned our own classrooms. It was the most humiliating thing for me to go and collect dirt from the classrooms in which I hadn't been. Some kids used to jeer at me, but I did it in order to get two pennies, so that I could pay my school fees. I also used to

search for ink pen nibs. The nibs would fall out of the pens, and some of the kids would not notice, or sometimes the pen would be pressed too hard during writing so that the nibs were bent or broken. I used to repair them myself with my teeth. Then, I'd sell them for a penny each.

I used to walk about three miles to a white school to help a black janitor there. The white students used to get free exercise books. I would come in Friday and find a half-used exercise book thrown away. I used a razor blade to cut off the unused pages. Then I would go to the city trash dump for discarded magazines, and cut out pictures that I would use to decorate the exercise books. With a yard of brown paper and paste, I'd make it a firm cover. I would sell the exercise books for the same price as the exercise books from the store (mine were decorated)—five pennies. That's how I raised my money to pay for my school fees. My parents discouraged me, saying that there was no need to continue my education since I was a girl.

Still, my father was the one who taught me first how to read, taught me about the world. He used to come home with the morning paper that his employers used to read and throw away. He'd take a razor blade, cut out one alphabet, show me this alphabet—"Here's the big alphabet, here's the small alphabet." He would read to me world events and hence I became interested in what is happening all over the world.

In our community, we spoke Sepedi, Sesotho, Zulu, and Setswana. If you go to South Africa, to the most rural area, you'll be amazed at the number of intertribal marriages. I am a product of multi-tribalizations many generations before me and my parents. When you see my last name, it's supposed to be a Swazi name, but I cannot speak one word of Swazi and neither can my mother. But my family does acknowledge that there have been Swazi traits, also Nguni. On my passbook it says Motswana, also the name of a tribal group.

The education for whites is called National Education—the whites refer to themselves alone as the nation. The rest of us are in Coloured Education, In-

dian Education, Bantu Education.

Bantu started out as a pure, unadulterated, indigenous, plural word for people—i.e., two people are Bantu. But the oppressors used it to label the indigenous African, just as the word "native" was used meaning the uncivilized, the unchristianized. When the present government came in, they labeled all blacks Bantu to fully perpetuate their separate-ness.*

At school, we were taught in our native languages up to the second grade. My parents chose Setswana because the schoolteacher was Setswana-speaking. Then the next language we were taught was English. We were taught mostly scribbles and little remarks that's all. We were also taught the white tribal language called Afrikaans.

Eventually, the Anglican church of mine a scholarship—even though I was not Anglican—and through that I was able to go to a teacher-training school founded by the African Methodist Episcopal church. It was called the Wilberforce Training Institute, named after the English antislavery crusader. It was all-black, run by blacks, for blacks. We even occasionally saw blacks from America. We never thought they would look the same, but the only difference we saw was their hair.

I began to learn, to gather a lot of information on how women have always resisted injustice. Even in our own ancestral heritage, women have played very prominent roles and to this very day, in South Africa, outside Pretoria in an area

* As a result of black student demands and the rebellion in Soweto in 1976, the word Bantu was eliminated from official use by the Education and Training Act of 1979. Nonetheless, primary and secondary education in South Africa remains segregated, although there is now a kind of token integration at the universities.

called Hammanskraal, there is an African woman, Esther Kekana, who is a chief in her own right, over men and women—even professional people, schoolteachers, clerks, social workers, doctors and ministers. And they all respect her authority. But another African concept I think the Western world should understand is that every human being is inherently a leader. For us, a chief is merely a mouthpiece for the people.

Women who never married in our traditional African sector, for example, were not seen as abnormal. They could own land, they could build their houses, they could stay with kids—because the greatest sin in our community is selfishness, which is more serious than murder. But we have had sexism, too, within our own African heritage; women used as the vessels of men, women refused equal opportunities to certain positions of leadership, but these injustices were not as rigid as those of the present South African government.

At my youthful age of 48, I have been living through the era of the pass laws. Historically, women in particular have resisted the pass laws openly, violently, and visibly. South African authorities stayed clear of issuing these passbooks to the women in the cities because they knew what kind of opposition they had. To get around us, in 1955 they passed a law called the Abolition of Passes and the Codification of Documents Act in which they deceived the African people by stating that they were getting rid of the passes that we had before. We now have new

books that are called "reference books" rather than passes. These are far more restrictive than the previous ones.

My education brought me to America—came here for seminary training. (Right now, I have my B.A. in liberal arts, and have my master's in divinity.) But I am still South African, although I am now without citizenship by decree of the white South African government. I've treasured my country far, far more being outside than I ever did being inside.

The impact of apartheid on all our lives tends to create a pressure to relegate "women's issues" to a remote priority. But I strongly believe that feminist issues must be dealt with concurrently because after the "political" struggles are over, the women tend to be forgotten.

I am still unordained by the Anglican church in South Africa because the Johannesburg (white) Anglican bishop is opposed to the ordination of women. The sexism he upholds within the church is just as evil as the racism of South Africa that he condemns.

I wish we could have a crystal ball to tell the future for South Africa. We are like people who are on the bottom of the mountain struggling to go up the mountain. We have the hope of going up the mountain, and we have been saying to those who are right on top of the mountain, "Come down, meet us halfway, so that we can live and share and be together." They have refused, but we are coming up anyway. And the longer they delay, the harder they will have to fall when they finally tumble down. ■

Reprinted with permission from Ms., November 1982



Peasant women protest the issuing of passes, 1957.

Photographer unknown.

Namibia: SWAPO Women

The following is reproduced from a paper prepared by the SWAPO (South African People's Organisation) Women's Campaign, dated September 1980. Called A Common Enemy: Namibian Women call for International Solidarity.

British imperialism and Namibia

British governments, Labour and Tory alike, have consistently supported decades of illegal South African colonial rule in Namibia. The South African army of occupation perpetrates its acts of rape, torture and murder with the help of arms from NATO countries; Western governments offer diplomatic protection to Pretoria by blocking demands for sanctions against South Africa at the U.N. — Britain is the forefront of Western attempts to manipulate the U.N. machinery in favour of the regime and its trading partners —; and British companies reap massive profits from Namibian minerals and karakul pelts. The links between the oppression of Namibia and British imperialism are perhaps more obvious in the British Government-British Nuclear Fuels contracts for Namibian uranium. This country receives 47 % of its uranium from Namibia through a contract between UKEA/RTZ (Rio Tinto Zinc) and the illegal South African administration, in defiance of international law. The rate of exploitation at Namibia's Rossing mine is high enough to encourage the companies to risk possible demands for compensation through the United Nations Council for Namibia. Workers at the mine have appealed to British sympathisers to put an end to the contract.

Western companies operating illegally in Namibia, do so on South Africa's terms, enforcing apartheid and the migrant labour system.

Namibian home fight

Although colonialism is a major factor in the oppression of Namibian women, there are, as in the case the world over, patriarchal traditions and attitudes dating back to pre-colonial society which persist even today, and have been intensified and manipulated by colonialism. Among them are traditional notions about "men's work" and women's work". Mathilda Amoomo, a Secretary in the Defence office of SWAPO, described the situation as follows :

"After spending up to seven hours of backbreaking labour in the fields women in the rural areas do not return to rest for the day. They must fetch water, grind grain into flour and prepare meals, not to mention washing the babies and their diapers. I do not mean to suggest that our men do nothing to help : they cut and clear trees off the fields for cultivation, and dig wells to obtain drinking water for both people and animals. They look after the herds. But on the whole, these are far less energy taking duties when compared to those performed by women.

Thus apart from the negative effect of contract labour which disrupts normal family life and puts extra work pressure on women, there are also remnants of semi-feudal mentality among our men. These attitudes are being struggled against in the process of national liberation, which is the fundamental issue before the Namibian people now."

Another woman in SWAPO said : "Traditionally, women used to eat after men and certain foods were reserved for men. The reason was supposed to be that men's work was hard and they needed to be stronger. It was not considered necessary for women to be educated. Talking about period pains in front of men was not allowed. These laws still exist, mostly among the older generation, and especially in the rural areas."

Colonialism has dispossessed Namibians of land they cultivated for centuries, forced all able-bodied men to seek employment in the settler-controlled industries, selling their labour-power to the foreigners who are plundering their national resources. Many of the men, like the workers at Rossing, are migrants. As Netumbo Nandi, a woman in SWAPO and member of the Central Committee says,

"Since colonialism, the participation of men in cultivation has decreased substantially. The African men were rapidly creamed off the rural areas to work as cheap labourers in the colonialists' mining, fishing and ranching industries. Therefore, under colonialism, the Namibian rural women have even harder times than before... Husbands are not allowed to take their families along to the places of employment. Thus, women must always remain working in the fields, as well as looking after their children at home and the overall household, while husbands and older boys are gone for very long spells — 12 to 18 months — on contract in the so-called "white areas". The men's wages are so meager that the drudgery of women's work is hardly ever alleviated by such incomes...

More and more women are drawn into domestic service working for more subsistence wages...

Whereas it was possible for the men who worked in the mining, construction and fishing areas for many years to become at least semi-skilled workers, it has been virtually impossible for women working in domestic service to acquire any productive skills. The situation has not fundamentally changed since the days of German colonialism...

Mathilda Amoomo noted :

"When the men are away for a year or more on contract the wives and daughters have to assume so many family responsibilities without the cheering help of their mature sons, husbands and cousins. For example, there is a severe shortage of clinics and hospitals in the rural areas. Malaria is always endemic in these areas, especially during the wet, rainy seasons. Although the rainy season is when people should spend much time cultivating their fields, more often than not you find women flocking with their children on their backs to far distant clinics in search of scarce medical services."

Reprinted with permission from ISIS International Bulletin 19,
Women in National Liberation Movements, July 1981

Namibians have resisted colonial domination for nearly a century now. In 1960, SWAPO, the national liberation movement, was formed. Netumbo Nandi comments on women's participation in the organisation :

"In the early stages of SWAPO, the participation of women was very small, due to the lingerings of semi-feudal mentality and structure in the country...

I must point out, however, that hundreds of Namibian women did participate in the historic Windhoek uprising of December 1959, involving mass boycotts of public works, transport, cinemas and beerhalls against the colonial regime's arbitrary removal of Windhoek's old African township to a new site which was located much further away from town...

The Windhoek uprising represents an important point of departure for our national liberation struggle. It marked the shift from the policies of petitioning the U.N. to that of mass agitation. In short, I can say that women were slower than men to get involved in the early years, but they were not very much behind as they too felt the oppression as much as the men.

Looking back to the early sixties it was impossible for SWAPO to become a truly people's organisation without the active and conscious participation of the masses of Namibian women. Accordingly, the Tanga Congress of December 1969, to January 1970, addressed itself to this question of mobilising women through SWAPO Women's Council...

In the 1970s, women began to take a very active part in organising meetings and rallies. We began to see that when SWAPO Youth activists held meetings and demonstrations against colonialism, women were sometimes in the majority. Some of the men began to rethink their traditional prejudices against women, as a good number of women began to be vocal at meetings. Colonial jails began to be filled with not only men, but also women. When the South African Government ordered mass public floggings in 1973 nearly half the victims were women. Over the last two years, thousands of Namibians decided to enlist in the People's Liberation Army of Namibia; a considerable number are women. Today you will find women at every level of our movement's structure. But whatever has been achieved so far must be seen not only as a victory against the existing social and economic structure which discriminates against women in employment and education, but also as a victory against the prejudices among some of our male comrades."

1980 SWAPO Women's Congress

The first Consultative Congress of the SWAPO Women Council (SWC) took place from the 20th-26th January, 1980 at Roca Rio Goa, Kwanza-Sul Province in the People's Republic of Angola.

The idea was to examine what the SWC was doing, where it was going, and whether it was representative of Namibian women. For the first time, SWAPO women elected their own officers. The history of the Council was discussed and its role in the national liberation struggle examined, with general recognition of the fact that the SWC must exist not only to mobilize women in that struggle, but also to deal with the specific problems of women and to uphold their interests within the organisation of SWAPO. As one delegate put it :

"Experience has shown that after the liberation struggle, women are left out of participation in the government which they helped to bring about."

Call for support

In the process of SWAPO's struggle, particularly the armed struggle, material conditions challenge tradition roles and beliefs. Child-bearing and child-rearing occur in a new context. These issues are complex : "A woman's right to choose" has another meaning in a country whose colonial history has been characterised by the South African regime's attempts to reduce its population by the use of drugs such as depo-provera, and where mass killings dating back to the extermination policies of the German colonists are still a fact of life. Malnutrition is also a feature of the Namibians' existence, and the regime's health services are oriented to the needs of the white settler elite. Namibians must pay for what meager medical facilities they are offered and the costs are often too high.

The infant mortality rate among black Namibians is 163 for every thousand births. In many parts of Africa and Asia, as people have been displaced and dispossessed, and where diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria take thousands of lives, children have become a source of security in old age. The idea of "Family Planning" is often seen, sometimes correctly, as being directed against the interests of people in the third world, whose struggles aim to eradicate poverty rather than the poor. Today, however, life in the refugee centres in Zambia and Angola demands a different approach — water is scarce, sanitation a problem and malnutrition a threat.

Women are eager to join the People's Liberation Army or to study abroad, and there are incentives both to obtain contraceptives and to make child-care more of a collective responsibility in the camps. It is in this context that women in SWAPO have appealed to solidarity groups to raise money for the purchase and shipment of contraceptives in bulk. They have also asked for tampax and sanitary towels, which are difficult to get at or near the front. Recently the SWAPO Secretary for Health and Social Welfare, a woman doctor, Libertine Amathila appealed to the NSC Health Collective in Britain to raise money to buy items for a maternity and childcare clinic. This is essential for SWAPO's expanding health system; high-risk pregnancies, childbirth, infant and post-natal care, contraception and community health education will be tackled. Because women in SWAPO are fighting a war, material assistance has implications far beyond humanitarianism, and it is vital to pose demands for material aid in their political context. By assisting the SWC in its own programme, we can contribute to the goal of a strong women's council that was described at this year's congress in Angola, which will help strengthen Namibian women's own struggle within the struggle. The SWC is all too aware of the dangers of tokenism, but it cannot counter it in isolation. Its work includes literacy projects, essential as the adult illiteracy rate in opportunities available to blacks under South African rule. The SWAPO Women's Campaign is collecting money for this and other projects of the SWC. ■

AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE LIBER- ATION PROCESS

In seeking to overcome the oppression of women, SWAPO proceeds from a number of theoretical and strategic propositions. In the first instance our movement holds the view that in order for us to be able to tackle this problem effectively, we need to understand and define it in both its historical and contemporary contexts. In this regard, we start from the theoretical proposition that the deformation in the woman's position in society began essentially at the level of the development of productive forces, when material production reached the scope of surplus products. That was the time when people began to produce not only for their own individual households but also for others. The emergence of surplus products created in society conditions which were conducive to people exploiting each other; and it was at that time that the process of private ownership of the means of production started and class society emerged.

Over the centuries and with further development of the productive forces and markets, the contradictions in the development of society became more and more evident. Such social contradictions did not only find their manifestations in the subordinate position of the woman to that of man, but also in the unequal rights between the toiling man and the landlord or capital-owning man. Therefore, the centuries-old subordinate position of woman in society, like that of the labouring man, is conditioned by the laws prevailing in ruling socio-economic structures under the system of private property.

This emerged very early in the production system of small peasant holdings and was later accentuated, following the rise of feudal and capitalist urban environments. Under the early peasant system of production, man was the nominal owner not only of the land but also of the instruments of work. Yet, the greater part of that agricultural production work was done by the woman; and when the product of her labour went to the market, her contribution to the exchange value of that product was hardly ever acknowledged by the nominal owner of the land and the instruments of work—the man.

In Africa, the exploitation of woman labour in peasant agricultural production is to a very large extent responsible for the emergence of certain pre-capitalist social relations and traditional structures, such as polygamy, whereby the accumulation of wives was more governed by the need for labour than by genuine love.

With the development of towns, under the system of hired labour man was able to respond faster to the demands of the labour market than the woman because he was more free than the women from the functions of biological reproduction. In this regard, man's work outside the home produced the new and more prestigious means of life; and this made the position of man in society, as the breadwinner, still more superior, even though in actual fact he himself was oppressed by his employer outside the home and his exploitation by capital in the town was only alleviated by the woman who continued to work on the land at home to supplement her man's meagre monetary income.

Apart from being the principal producer in the system of small peasant farming, the woman was also the bearer of most of the responsibilities in the home: she was the cook, the mother, the one looking after children, the old, the sick and the disabled, and busy as she was all the time she had no time left to improve her knowledge of work methods at home and in the field.

With the development of industry and the concomitant expansion of the market of goods and money, there also emerged the need for the expansion of the labour market; and, in this way, women began to be included in the army of hired workers. But, since they were still overburdened with most of the family responsibilities, ie the chores of child-bearing and child-upbringing, seeing to food, etc, the women were, again at a disadvantage. They were not able to sufficiently improve their productive skills at the same speed as men, who were free from many of those chores of household. Against this background, they became mainly unskilled workers who were paid lower wages when it came to employment outside the home.

Moreover, the inhuman overburdening of women with housework and many other family tasks inevitably reflected badly upon her health; and, in turn, this reflected unfavourably upon her performance on the job. Because of all this, women were, as a general practice, relegated to jobs that were regarded to be physically, technically and intellectually less demanding. That meant also being continually relegated to menial labour and lower wages.

In the course of time an ideological conception emerged about what is known as natural division of labour, ie division of labour based not on technical specialisations but on the distinction of work for women and men. This ideological conception of natural division of labour came to serve not only as justification for the relegation of women to a subordinate position in the system of social production but also as a foundation for discrimination against women in the field of education; for, in accordance with private capital's constant search for profit, investment in the training of women, whose role in the social production of surplus value was considered to be minimal, was assumed not to be profitable. Thus, women were given only short and scanty education, if at all they were given education.

The foregoing analysis shows that the woman's subordinate position in the society (and consequently in the family) is not only an historically evolved problem but also the result of class interests.

Hence, in seeking to resolve this centuries-old problem, SWAPO proceeds from the proposition that women's oppression should not be regarded as an independent problem which can be solved through a feminist struggle isolated from the main world revolutionary currents, ie the struggle for national liberation, democracy and classless society. It can only be genuinely resolved through a revolutionary transformation of society.

In Namibia, where both pre-capitalist and capitalist social relations and economic structures prevail, women suffer double oppression. Those who live in the rural areas, engaged in small peasant farming, are not only burdened with the household chores but also with the alleviation of the exploitation of their menfolk who, according to apartheid laws, must migrate constantly from villages to towns (and vice versa) in search of temporary employment as cheap

labourers. Here, women are virtually responsible for all the care and work of the family. With their menfolk away from home most of the time on contract labour in towns, the women must bear the responsibility concerning the upbringing and educating of the children, in addition to the drudgery of housework and subsistence farming.

In the cities and towns women must be content with lower paid jobs, mainly as domestic servants of the oppressive white colonial settlers and unskilled in the service industry. They are also the last to be considered in matters of training and education. Moreover, they make up the highest percentage of the unemployed people. And no meaningful change in their social status and productive role is conceivable under the prevailing social and economic system in our country. Only the liberation of the country can open up vistas for such a change.

This is why we have stated, at the beginning, the proposition that the liberation of women cannot be achieved in isolation from the main currents of the anti-imperialist and class struggle. It is in the process of the struggle for liberation and socio-economic justice that the people's social consciousness is advanced and reactionary attitudes towards the women's position and role in society are progressively reshaped.

However, only by actively taking part in the national liberation struggle can Namibian women heighten their own political consciousness, sharpen their class perspectives, broaden their intellectual horizons, give full play to their talents, realise their own strength, and increase their own sense of self-confidence. And it is for this reason that we have asserted, as a strategic proposition, that the participation of women in the struggle is an important aspect of the liberation process.

Reprinted from Namibia Today, Vol. 6 No. 2, February 1982. Namibia Today is an official organ of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) of Namibia.

The Only Way to Free Ourselves...

An extract from an interview with Ellen Musialela, Assistant Secretary for Finance, SWAPO Women's Council, January 1981. The complete text is available from the Women's Committee, Anti-Apartheid Movement, 89 Charlotte Street, London W.1, UK.

What particular problems do women face in exile, in the refugee camps, and in the armed struggle ?

I think I should start from the very beginning, to say that it has been proved that no revolution will triumph without the participation of women. The SWAPO Women's Council was created in 1969 at a congress held in Tanzania, to enable women to participate fully in SWAPO and in the armed struggle. At that time there were very few women who were active. Up to 1974, when our women started to come forward in their thousands, we were still faced with a lot of problems. Inside Namibia itself, it is very hard to communicate as women. The apartheid system that we live under does not allow women to move freely. You have to have an explanation to move from region to region. We are the people who are left in the villages, and you know that the work of the woman in Namibia is just to look after children, to bear them and to bring them up. Women also have to look after animals in the villages, while our men are taken away for long months – eighteen months at a time – for the rest of their lives.

So when women came out into exile, we were like a body without a leader. In 1979, SWAPO decided that, as we felt we had organised ourselves, it was time to call a congress. The SWAPO Women's Council had its first congress from 20-26 January 1980. We elected a Secretary, who had two assistants and a deputy – the last being Gertrude Kandanga, who is inside the country. She was arrested when she was trying to leave Namibia. Immediately after the Congress, we felt it was our duty to continue to mobilise. We have to make our women understand the need to participate fully in the armed struggle – not by saying that we should go to work in the kitchen, or carrying guns for our men, but participating such that today there are Namibian women commanders. Some women have sacrificed their lives on the battlefield; some are very good at communications, reconnaissance and in the medical field. Of course you also find that women in the camps are taking a very active role in our kindergartens, in our medical centres, as nurses, as teachers, and in productive work.

Our women, in the battlefield especially, are faced with a lot of problems when it comes to sanitary towels. It's the number one problem. Also things like panties and bras, the things that women can't do without. It's very important that women from the outside world sympathise. I saw with my own eyes when I went to the battlefield in May, how women were forced to use grass during their periods, and had to go without panties. We also need warm clothing, shoes and

blankets. On the same visit I saw small children sleeping in the open without warm clothing. Nevertheless their spirit remains high. With the assistance of our friends in the outside world, the Namibian struggle will continue.

Because women have chosen to fight side by side with men on all three fronts of the struggle – diplomatic, military and political – you find that they are accorded great respect by men. It's obvious that men, especially in African customs, have customs which hinder the progress of women and which look upon women as weak. But today you find that our men in the camps don't look at women just as women, to be separated out to do the cooking. But work is divided up among groups irrespective of sex, whether it's gardening, cooking or any of the work of the camp. If you look at the leadership of SWAPO today, you find that both men and women are coming up to be members of the Central Committee, the Executive Committee. Women are starting to appear at the international level, in campaigning for SWAPO. Inside the country also, women are playing an active role; women like Ida Jimmy, Gertrude Kandanga and Rauna Nambinga. Women are harassed because of the role they have taken as mothers, to hide our combatants, giving them shelter and food. We feel proud that, despite the traditional barriers between men and women, women have started to understand that we have to fight together to fight the system, because we are oppressed as women, and we are oppressed as blacks – both men and women.

How has the political consciousness of women changed as a result of their participation in the struggle ?

When women first started to come out, in the early 1970s, you would rarely see a woman expressing herself. Inside Namibia, the enemy has made a point of depicting women as less than nothing, just something to be pushed into the kitchen and stay there. This has made our women think that, even if they are talented, they shouldn't show their talent. But when women started to come out, when we started to mobilise them, to prepare them to participate in any front that they are called to, you find that their consciousness has deepened. They don't feel that to take arms to go and fight, to die, is just a waste of time. They feel proud. When I visited the battlefield in May, I saw them sleeping in the open, in the cold, sometimes they didn't have enough food. I asked them : "Comrades, why did you come trained ? Why did you leave Namibia ?" They said : "We just wanted to be trained, to go back and fight, because that's the only salvation, the only way to free ourselves."

So you can see that their consciousness is very high. Their consciousness has been alerted to watch out for the enemy. In reconnaissance, you find that our women are very active.

They are the people in the forefront, bringing in information to our base commanders.

What kind of solidarity can women in their countries give to women in Namibia ?

It's very important for women in other countries to stand with us as women. As mothers, we should understand that it's our children, whom we carry for nine months, who suffer and die. It's important that women help us by writing petitions to the South African embassy and to their own government. We want our political prisoners released, especially Ida Jimmy, Gertrude Kandanga and Rauna Nambinga, and many others whose names we don't know. It's important for women to protest, as women, that these kinds of barbaric acts, by which South Africa harasses women, should stop.

It's important that women here in the West should side with women from the liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia. We tell them our problems, because we are the people who feel the pinch, who have been affected by apartheid.

When we went to the Copenhagen Conference, we were very disappointed by the women from the West. I don't mean the solidarity committees, although it's up to them to put pressure on women to understand that it's we who feel the pinch. These women from Britain, West Germany and America were trying to force us to restrict ourselves to equality development and peace, on the grounds that if we were outside these topics we would be trying to bring in politics. But we can't see how we can otherwise talk about equality, because in Namibia both women and men are oppressed as people; we don't vote; we don't control our natural resources; we don't have any say. This is very well known. We can't talk about development because we have been pushed out of our land — we don't have any land to develop. Even if you are inside the country you are pushed into the bantustans. We can't talk of peace because our country is at war. All these things have to be understood, so that women in the West appreciate the importance of solidarity with the women in the liberation movements and in the struggle.

Can you say something more about the conditions of women in detention ?

I'll start with Gertrude Kandanga, the deputy Secretary of the SWAPO Women's Council, whom we elected at the Congress in her absence. She was arrested when she was trying to come out to the Congress. Since then we have been trying to find out where she is in Namibia, but we have very little news. What we do know is that conditions for prisoners in Namibia are very bad, whether for men or women, we go under the same conditions. People should understand that in detention in a South African prison, you don't sleep — the light is on for the whole 24 hours, and they disturb you. This has resulted in many of our people coming out of jail in a disturbed and confused state. The conditions under which people are living in jail, whether women or men, I'm sure they have last been seen in Nazi Germany. It's up to women here to protest for their release. We ourselves cannot get information from the South Africans; there are many prisoners who have disappeared.

Can you comment on the dangers that women face of being raped by the security forces ?

In Namibia today the situation is very bad. I'm not trying to exaggerate, but our country has been placed under martial

law. You find the South African Police patrolling in the streets, and their work is to shoot on the spot, rape, and commit all kinds of genocide, by burning villages, and destroying food. This has resulted in many of our women leaving their villages and crossing into Angola for shelter. Our women are raped, whipped in public, tortured almost to death — some of them have been killed during torture, some of them have been thrown into jail without trial. Even those women who have left Namibia in the mass exodus with their children are still followed by South Africa, bombed and killed. South Africa announces they have killed SWAPO freedom fighters when in reality they have killed innocent people who are not armed, people who are running away from their own country.

What kind of health and welfare services exist in Namibia under the apartheid system, particularly as they affect women — childcare facilities, maternity facilities, nurseries and so on ?

I think Namibia is the worst country I have seen. The South African government has completely ignored the health of the people. That's why the people of Namibia today have taken up arms, because of the way we have been treated. If you go to Namibia today, you will find that there are still people who don't know what a hospital is, what a doctor is. This has resulted in many deaths of children before they reach the age of five. From the time that the child is in the mother's stomach, the mother won't receive any care, won't go to an antenatal clinic for examination, up to the time that the child is born in the village. Maybe she'll be lucky and that child will be born in a hospital, but the facilities are so bad that you find that in the so-called maternity hospitals, women still sleep on the floor, they are given dirty blankets, the children are not provided with enough clothes.

When it comes to the welfare of people, that has been forgotten about. Centres for the disabled, clinics for the under-fives — these things don't exist in Namibia. Malnutrition, measles, whooping cough — all the diseases of children just continue. Nurseries — I have never seen a nursery in Namibia.

When it comes to contraceptives, these are not known. This has resulted in many deaths. A woman will have as many children as she can, because she doesn't have any means of spacing them. There's no place where our women can go to be advised on spacing their children. In Namibia children are very much needed, because we are underpopulated. But it's useless, because each year you will find a woman will have children, and they won't grow because they die of malnutrition, they die from all kinds of diseases.

It's only now, that South Africa is trying to deceive the world. I'm trying to point out to Western women, especially to feminist groups, that I think they have a role to play. Because the West is dumping medicines in the Third World, including Namibia. Women who decide that it is better to space their children go to a doctor for advice. These women will be stopped from giving birth — these days they are using Depo Provera on them without telling them the truth about what they are doing. It's a form of genocide and the South African government has the policy of making sure that the black population remains low. They are using Depo Provera both in South Africa and in Namibia. Women here should look into this, and fight against the companies that send these medicines to Southern Africa and sterilise our women. ■

Reprinted with permission from ISIS International Bulletin 19, Women in National Liberation Movements, July 1981.

Resolutions from the 2nd Conference of the Organization of Mozambican Women

In November 1976 the Organization for Mozambican Women (OMM) held its second conference in Maputo. This is not an official translation. For a complete text of conference resolutions see People's Power in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau (Number 6, January-February 1977, MAGIC, 12 Little Newport Street, London WC2AH 7JJ).

SOME OF THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING WOMEN TODAY

Introduction

The present predicament of Mozambican women reveals a lower level of development compared with men in cultural, socio-political and economic terms. This stems from discrimination in education in traditional society, aggravated by racial, social and sexual discrimination imposed by Portuguese colonialism. It is in this context that we can understand why illiteracy, religious mystification, tribalism, regionalism and racism, and inferiority complexes are all more deeply rooted in women.

Illiteracy

Women's secondary status in traditional society was reinforced by their inability to acquire new knowledge and skills under colonialism, especially literacy.

Illiteracy affects the vast majority of the Mozambican people. It has a particularly high incidence among women who were doubly exploited in traditional and colonial society, which instilled in women a feeling of inferiority and dependence and conditioned them merely to please men and run a household.

Colonial education only reached a small number of Mozambicans because of racial discrimination and class differentials. Unbridled exploitation made it impossible for the people to afford education, school materials and other related expenses. That only left the missions, which nurtured a spirit of conformism and passivity through teaching mystifying ideas. This only added to the feelings of inferiority stemming from traditional society.

The difficulties produced by illiteracy are evident in various everyday situations.

- 1 During the armed struggle we needed training to help us handle certain problems — for instance, how to assess distance — so instruction had to be given in schools.
- 2 Those who cannot read or write cannot understand or put into effect the written directives of state and party organs. This also applies to other instructions such as books on politics, circulars from party headquarters, principles of hygiene, use of medicines, medical prescriptions, use of fertilizer and so on.
- 3 The illiterate person cannot exchange correspondence.
- 4 Ignorance about weights and measures and the value of money makes it easier for people to be cheated in shops.
- 5 A husband might deceive his wife about the level of his earnings.

In Mozambique, the problem is made worse for those who have not been to school because that means that they cannot speak Portuguese either, which is the official language of communication. This limits women's access to information. These difficulties were evident even during the course of the Second Conference: because of illiteracy, a large proportion of the delegates could not follow the reading and discussion of the reports.

Divisions among Women

'Assimilation', the colonial policy whereby some western-educated Mozambicans were granted Portuguese status, divides the people and weakens them politically, as do tribalism and racism. All these things affect solidarity among women.

Within the OMM there are women who refuse to work under a comrade from another province or race. How many cases do we know of children who despise their parents because they are black or ignorant? How many cases do we know of parents who act like servants to their own children because the latter are 'mulatto' or 'assimilado'? Racial prejudices still give rise to erroneous ideas about who is Mozambican and who is not. The criterion is still always race. This is particularly a problem in the cities. Lack of political awareness — resulting from a failure to take part in study and political work among the people — leads to the perpetuation of these errors with all their serious consequences.

Many women suffer from a lack of self-confidence, making them ineffective, and suspicious of each other. They are further divided by class and social status. Single and divorced women are also socially isolated and stigmatized, whereas men in the same position are not.

The process of rendering women inferior originates in traditional education. It is reinforced by 'initiation rites' and other such traditional practices which lead to passive acceptance and lack of initiative. The woman becomes an object of appropriation and pleasure, bartered by her family and subjugated to her husband's will. On top of this age-old process, women also suffered the humiliation of colonial society which robbed them of their husbands and children and exploited them at work. Colonialism very often left prostitution as the only means of a livelihood... By discriminating against the illiterate woman, it made her feel more inferior because she neither understood nor belonged to the (alienating) way of life in the urban areas.

This feeling of inferiority holds women back from participating in meetings and even in family discussions — in front of their husbands and children, women feel unable to express their own opinions. Their inhibitions and lack of initiative in turn produce an inability to take on responsible jobs or to break away from this conditioning. Furthermore, the 'assimilated' woman humiliates her 'non-assimilated' sister by adopting showy manners and idiosyncracies, talking in incomprehensible terms and setting herself apart from the rest.

Another form of superiority is 'veteranism' which is reflected in the need to be forever reasserting the fact that one has been involved in the struggle for a long time. Women who do this think that in this way they will increase their own social standing.

If the situation is not objectively analysed, women run the risk of coming to regard not only men but also other women as their enemies. Married women and women who are generally frustrated tend to regard single women — that is single mothers, divorced women and spinsters — as emancipated. Women whose feelings of inferiority and dependence in relation to men are deeply embedded are incapable of conceiving of life without men.

Problems in the towns

The special problems of women in the towns are seen not just from their personal dependence on men, but also as a result of colonialism. Abortion, prostitution, divorce, alcoholism, abandoned children, unemployment — all call for practical measures of education and organization. But they also must be seen in the context of the fight against cultural imperialism, and the undermining of Mozambican society. Through the imposition of western bourgeois values, individualism and promiscuity are mistaken for emancipation.

The aim of the revolution is the ending of all forms of exploitation and oppression. For the revolution to succeed, we must completely eradicate the exploitation and oppression women suffer. While suffering the same exploitation and oppression suffered by all Mozambican people, women also had to bear the special victimization of their sex. The city, the bourgeois fortress and the focal point for the sharpening of the class struggle, is where women feel this double oppression and exploitation most acutely.

As workers, they are obliged to sell their labour for miserable wages, and to sell their bodies to their exploiters — only to find themselves rejected and discriminated against by their own class. As housewives, they are cut off from the essential problems of social life and reduced to serving their husbands, who are themselves exploited and oppressed. Finally, women of the petty-bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie assimilate bourgeois cultural and moral ideas and become vehicles for, and agents of, conservative and reactionary ideology. In the city, traditional social values are broken down, only to be replaced by the vices, alienation and decadence characteristic of the colonial bourgeoisie. It is also in the city that the people are least organized. This leaves them more susceptible to vices, and at the same time makes it more difficult to work out a plan of action to combat them.

*Mulatto or 'mestizo': being of ethnically mixed parentage (mestizos were considered of slightly higher status than blacks).

Problems in the rural areas

Traditional practices still exist which endanger women's physical and psychological health, and deny them control over their own lives. A proper analysis must be made of these customs, so that women may understand them and so resist more effectively.

In the rural areas, the Mozambican peasant woman knew of colonial exploitation through the pillaging of the lands and the shops. She knew colonialism as a repressive system which, through the administrative machine, took her husband and children away for the degradation and misery of forced labour.

Quite apart from this exploitative and oppressive system to which all the people were subjected, the Mozambican peasant woman is subjected to a second form of oppression which stems from the traditional feudal ideology. That ideology conceives of the woman's role as serving men — as an object of pleasure, as a procreator and as an unpaid worker.

The ideological values of the traditional feudal society are inculcated in a woman from the moment she is born by a whole educational system within the family. That education is different for a boy than for a girl. It inculcates in her the spirit of submission to the man, and in him the spirit of authority. The woman's societal position is consecrated in ceremonies and institutions like 'the initiation rites' and the system of marriage; that is, Lobolo,* premature and forced marriages and polygamy. And the educational effect of ceremonies and institutions, practised in traditional feudal society for centuries, brought the woman to assume an inferior and passive position. Because the capacity to revolt and to have a critical mind were destroyed, the woman later became the disseminator and defender of retrograde and reactionary values.

Initiation rites: Initiation rites inculcate into women submissiveness and total dependence on men. Women are conditioned to submit and gradually come to take their inferiority for granted. They are brought up with the sole aim of serving men — as objects of pleasure, sources and producers of labour. The treatment of women is the same throughout the country: the form may vary, but the final objective is always the same. To make the young girl submissive and resigned to physical suffering, terrible treatment is inflicted.

Lobolo: This practice exists throughout the country. Its rationale is that it is compensation for the transfer of labour power from one family to another. This puts women into a situation of total dependence on men, who because they have paid for them, can use and disown them like mere objects. Despite work already carried out, this practice still persists. Experience has shown that women are still not aware of their oppressed condition or of the real implications of 'lobolo'. Many still defend it on the grounds that without the payment of a 'lobolo' they have not been taken as legitimate and honest women.

Polygamy: In our patriarchal society, the man is the owner of all material goods produced within the family. Polygamy is a system whereby the man possesses a number of wives. As head and proprietor of the family, he acquires more wives to augment the labour force at his service. In addition to this, society's contempt for the single woman leads her to marry a man even if he is already married. It should also be pointed out that in the majority of cases it is the wife herself who procures other wives for her husband, with the object of increasing the labour force to help her in family production.

PROGRAMME FOR ACTION

The strategy in the present phase of the Mozambican revolutionary struggle was laid down by the 8th Central Committee Meeting of FRELIMO, held in February 1976. It was reiterated by our Comrade President in his opening speech to the 2nd Conference. It is:

The development of the material and ideological basis for the construction of a Socialist society.

Production must be the principal work in building socialism. The principal activity must be that of class struggle.

The OMM took part in the working out of this programme. Its objective was defined as being: to find ways to achieve woman's emancipation from all forms of exploitation through her integration into the principal task. To do this the OMM should:

- 1 See to it that every woman becomes involved in production (either in the factory or in the agricultural cooperative), in the organization and planning of work and social life. Women must also become involved in the development of the new man and the new society.
- 2 Organize the fight against old ideas which are a huge obstacle to the full involvement of the woman as a citizen in public and social life. Such ideas inhibit her participation in economic life as a producer and in family life as a truly revolutionary companion and educator.
- 3 Fully review the present structures so as to ensure that the OMM's new structures effectively reflect the worker-peasant class as the vanguard leading Mozambican society in the construction of socialism.

*Lobolo: bride price.

Women in the communal village and agricultural cooperative

Agriculture is the basis of our economy and of the economic development of our country. It is also the sector in which the majority of women are involved. Their participation up to now has been limited to the carrying out of projects and activities developed and led by men. The reorganization of agriculture on a collective basis through communal villages and cooperatives opens new perspectives for the development of the countryside and the life of the peasant. It also opens up greater possibilities for woman's involvement in that process, on an equal footing with men. This will accelerate her emancipation.

The Conference recommends the involvement of women in setting up communal villages and production cooperatives.

Throughout all of this, the OMM's main concern is to establish a woman's belief in her own abilities. Job discrimination must be rejected at the outset by making woman value herself, and learn to do those jobs which are traditionally man's preserve.

Women in the factory

The 2nd Conference feels that the woman worker is relegated to doing the routine jobs which demand least mental exertion. They are usually non-mechanized, manual jobs. Discriminated against by her fellow workmates, inhibited by feelings of inferiority from actively participating in the political struggle within the firm, the woman has not developed a class consciousness.

Freed for work by creches and canteens, women must be trained in all aspects of production, and be proportionally represented on production councils. Similar recommendations for political work, collective organization and involvement of women in production are made for those in the service and industrial sectors, and for housewives.

THE IDEOLOGICAL CAMPAIGN

Education

Recommendations are made on schooling, and on political, scientific and vocational training for women as an essential part of the programme to raise their political consciousness. The media should be used to promote these aims and project a new image of women, participating in all areas of rebuilding society.

Women and men must also be made conscious of their own roles in the educational process.

Discrimination against women starts soon after birth. It is obvious in the different treatment given to a male child. A girl is, from earliest infancy, trained to carry out domestic tasks and serve men. That includes even her younger brothers.

The boys, on the other hand, are trained to assume responsibilities and also to be always waited on by women — their mother, their sisters and, therefore later, their wife.

This process of indoctrination is carried out by the actual parents. It has a logical continuation in school life. The boys always have more demands made of them. The girls always follow. They never lead.

It is a matter of urgency that the OMM:

- make the mother aware of her responsibility in the development of new attitudes and outlook amongst the family. The OMM must show women that they themselves contribute to the oppression from which they suffer because of the education they give their own male children.
- Encourage the idea that school, above the age of 7 years, is as much for girls as for boys.
- Recommend that the Party's political courses include the problem of the emancipation of women. This will help all cadres to understand and carry on the fight for women's liberation. It should be a matter of priority to all revolutionaries of both sexes.

External relations

During the armed struggle for national liberation, FRELIMO always attached great importance to international solidarity and cooperation. It was in this spirit that the OMM developed relations with other women's organizations. However, because of deficiencies in the politics, organizations and structures of the OMM, the true value of these contacts with women in other countries was never realized.

The OMM should work to renew its relations with other women's organizations, especially those whose objectives and activities identify with ours, that is, those who are involved in a revolutionary process and the construction of socialism and with whom FRELIMO and the People's Republic of Mozambique have good relations. These relations are designed to:

- Get to know the experiences of female vanguard revolutionaries in the class struggle and the building of socialism.
- Give an idea of our struggle and experience as a contribution to women in their fight for liberation.
- Reinforce relations with all liberation movements throughout Africa and the world, in line with the spirit of proletarian internationalism.

Mozambique: Mobilizing Women

The following is summarized and translated from an article written by Lavinia Gasperini and from an interview by the author with Salomé Moiana, Secretary-General of the Organization of Mozambican Women (OMM) in 1980. The original article and interview are in Italian.

Five Hundred Years of Colonialism

Slave trade. Expropriation of Natural Resources. Export-oriented agriculture, dominated by monoculture and forced labor. Destruction of the subsistence economy. Importation of industrial and manufactured goods from Portugal at the expense of developing local industry. This is how Portugal "underdeveloped" Mozambique.

The Challenge

This year Frelimo¹, after five years of independence, has launched a challenge. Within the decade, the Mozambicans propose to eliminate the effects of 500 years of colonialism: hunger, poverty, illiteracy. Workers who for centuries have worked for others have now begun to work for themselves. In this way, according to the Mozambican leaders, an independent economy, planned, progressive and capable of satisfying the basic needs of the people, will create the conditions to pass to a "higher stage of a socialist economy".

The basis of this development will be a collectively organized agriculture. Industry will be the dynamic factor. In the workplaces, on the school walls, on the banners which greet new arrivals at the airport, it is written: we will make 1980-1990 the decade of victory over underdevelopment.

The Involvement of the Organization of Mozambican Women

The Organization of Mozambican Women (OMM) is also participating in this challenge. The battle for development, which in Mozambique means socialism, is also the battle for the liberation of women. The principle contradiction towards which the battle is directed was stated during the founding conference of the OMM. It is not between men and women, but between women and the social order, between all the oppressed, men and women, and the private ownership of the means of production. And those most oppressed in the whole society are women. Exploited by the owners, beaten by slave husbands, crushed by the colonists, women cannot liberate themselves without the revolution and the revolution cannot exist without the liberation of women.

Colonialism exacerbated the oppression of women but it did not invent it. It was already part of the Bantu society, a class society whose women occupied the lowest rung. Source of labor, pleasure and procreator for their husbands, women did not have the right to speak out, to own or to inherit. They

had no legal personality. Even today, a husband chooses a woman and exchanges money or goods for her with the family which "gives" her away. Initiation rites, early marriages, polygamy are all manifestations of the same phenomenon: the exploitation of women.

In addition to agricultural labor for the family, which fell mainly on the women, and domestic work, there was, in the colonial period, the exploitation in the mines, in forced labor, on the plantations. Only the work of the women in the "machamba", or family plot, guaranteed, with difficulty, subsistence and reproduction, given that colonialism offered only forced labor or starvation wages. On women's shoulders fell the burden of caring for men maimed by inhuman work or laid off seasonally, the old people and the children.

National Independence, Socialism and Women

Many women participated in the struggle for national liberation. In the "aldeias comunais"² women are participating for the first time in the entire life of the community and are holding positions of leadership. This participation in all spheres of production, in both urban and rural areas, and especially in socialized production, the participation in political and cultural struggle, the holding of positions of leadership has not been an easy or linear process.

The OMM is attempting to solve the problem of the employment of women with collective solutions: the "aldeias comunais", green zones³, production and service cooperatives. The conditions to do this are not easy. For centuries the women in Mozambique have not had the opportunity to express themselves, to discuss, to become aware, to decide. Socialized work, political meetings, education are conditions to liberate themselves from a situation of passivity, of resignation, of lack of confidence in themselves accumulated in the past.

NOTES:

¹ Frelimo was founded in 1962 as a liberation front with a nationalist program. In 1977, it became a "Marxist-Leninist" party.

² "Aldeias Comunas" or communal villages are the future agricultural centers of Mozambique. Today there are more than a thousand of them with about one million inhabitants. They are self-governing and organize production and consumer cooperatives and their own social services around family agricultural production.

³ Zones near the cities which are agricultural belts surrounding the congested urban areas.

INTERVIEW WITH SALOME MOIANA, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF MOZAMBICAN WOMEN (OMM)

Question: What does it mean to be a woman in Mozambique? What problems does the OMM face?

Answer: In addition to the problems we have inherited from colonialism, we are faced every day with the customs arising from the forms of social organization prior to the colonial period, as in almost all African societies. In the family the woman is the instrument of production and reproduction. She works and has a large number of children to serve her husband. She has no right to an opinion in the family. The initiation rites and the various types of marriage perpetuate, from generation to generation, this situation of oppression.

Q: What are the implications for women of the rites which mark the passage from childhood to adulthood?

A: Through these rites, girls are given a sexual education surrounded by mystery. Bodily functions are explained as if they were forbidden things which only certain people can transmit. The parents do not educate their children in these matters. Girls are told about sexual life between the ages of nine and fourteen: they are inculcated with the conviction that upon marriage they must serve their husbands who will be the owners and masters of their lives and bodies. Boys, on the other hand, are given a vision of their relationship with women as one of master to servant. One result of these initiation rites are the still widespread early marriages: girls of nine or ten marry after this rite, as it signifies the passage to adulthood. Frelimo is working to eliminate this practice.

Q: Another aspect I would like to discuss is the question of "lobolo" (bride-price).

A: Originally the lobolo only signified an alliance between two families. Money was not involved, only small symbolic offerings which the family of the future husband gave to the family of the future wife. The colonial society introduced money into this custom. It is only with colonialism that we can really speak of a form of buying and selling as compensation for transfer of labor force from one family to another. The husband becomes the "owner" of the wife and can demand of her anything he wants.

With our struggle we are working towards overcoming this situation of inferiority of Mozambican women. To this end we are organizing political programs against initiation rites, explaining to the people why the lobolo is negative. We began this campaign during the period of the national liberation struggle and now are beginning to see the results. In the zones liberated during the war the initiation rites have disappeared for some time already. We intend to extend this victory to the whole country. As far as sex education is concerned, we are organizing programs in the schools in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Health. It will take time. We have just begun.

Q: Circumcision is practiced on boys. Are there similar ritual ceremonies carried out on girls?

A: There are various ceremonies for lengthening the labia of the vagina. With the first menstruation women are forbidden to eat meat, eggs or to season their food. These are prejudices without scientific basis. In a very few zones excision of the clitoris is practiced. We condemn these practices because their only aim is to increase the pleasure of the man. We believe the sexual relationship is a complement of love and that both should enjoy it equally.

Q: What do you think about polygamy? What are its causes?

A: Various reasons are used to justify polygamy. For example, if a couple does not have any children, the sterility is always attributed to the woman. The husband, then, has the right to take another wife. In some cases it is even the woman herself who looks for the second wife. There is also the prejudice that sexual relations are not permitted during pregnancy and until two years after the birth of the child. Another reason is the need for help with the domestic work and agricultural production for the family. In a basically agrarian society, such as ours, if a man can get five children from one wife, he can get ten from two wives and so on. These are all hands that work for him for free.

Q: We have been speaking about problems arising from the Mozambican social formations and accentuated by capitalism. What about the problems caused by capitalism itself?

A: Prostitution, for example, was introduced by the Portuguese and promoted by the existence of the colonial army camps. The guidelines of Frelimo are to fight the causes of the problem. For this reason re-education camps have been created for persons -- men and women -- involved in prostitution with political education programs aimed at reintegrating them into society. Our organization seeks to find jobs for the women so they will have a means of subsistence, and to mobilize support for them. Prostitution exists because there are those who go to prostitutes. Our work, therefore, is also directed to those who promote prostitution.

Q: How does the OMM participate in the Health Minister's program for the "protection of the mother and child"?

A: The problem of family planning is linked to the social problems of traditional families. For example, during initiation rites, women are told that they must abstain from sexual relations for two years after the birth of the child, ignoring any other alternative method for spacing births.

This project will begin work informing women about the various methods of spacing births. Women in Mozambique

usually have five to ten children. For us, it is not a matter of reducing births because our country is large and underpopulated. However, we want to have children born healthy and not to have women's health harmed.

Q: The OMM recently completed its sixth year. What is its history?

A: The OMM was born during the struggle for national liberation as Frelimo's response to the need for women's liberation. Frelimo recognized this struggle as one for the complete liberation of people from exploitation and it saw women's liberation as one aspect of this. From the beginning of the armed struggle women participated in mobilizing the people against the colonial forces. They got the peasants to support the guerrillas, especially with food. They cared for the children whose parents were fighting and they aided in the transport of arms.

One of the first steps was the creation of the "Women's Detachment" or the women's organization of the People's Liberation Army of Mozambique (FPLM), presently our armed forces. Women participated in the liberation struggle with arms. In the war, many women showed themselves capable of the same work as men which did much to dispel myths about the innate incapacity of women. However, many women did not participate directly in the FPLM, mainly because in traditional society they are not trained to participate in the life of the community.

Because of this there was a need for an organization to politicize women and involve them in the struggle. Frelimo decided to create such an organization and the OMM was founded in 1973. Its principal objective was to mobilize all Mozambican women regardless of race, social position or place of birth. The OMM also supported Frelimo in its international relations in order to arouse world public opinion, interest and solidarity in our cause and, at the same time, create an awareness among Mozambican women of women's struggles in other countries.

Q: In what sectors do women usually work?

A: We have organized women in such a way that they can perform tasks not traditionally done by women: building the villages and houses, cutting the cane for building houses. In the "aldeias comunais" (communal villages) we are struggling not only for a new organization of material life, but also to create new human relationships, beginning with the family, so that the men help the women with the domestic work. The women, in fact, work much more than the men.

Even today many of our men go to work in the mines of South Africa and the women are left to maintain the family for two or three years through agricultural work. In any case, it is always the women who must gather wood for cooking, fetch water, and supply the food. In the city it is the same: in addition to work in the factory, she has to do all the domestic work.

Because of this we are mobilizing the men to help their wives with the domestic work. Some are already doing this, but it will be a very long process - transforming men from master to companion is not always an easy task.

Some changes can already be seen. For example, men who accompany women in the street and carry the baby in their arms. This was unheard of before. Even today in many parts of the country it is common to see a woman walking great distances with her husband with a baby in her arms, a basket on her head and even her husband's jacket, while his hands are empty.

In the cities, the few women who got work from the colonialists were not given equal pay with men. Today there are still not many women working in the cities, but the principle is equal pay for equal work. Most women work in textile or food sectors. The few women working in the mechanical industries are there through the initiative of the OMM, supported by the Minister of Labor. Our middle-long term objective is to integrate women into all sectors of production. We have already had good experiences with women tractor drivers, carpenters, mechanics, drivers - all traditionally male jobs.

This is not easy because we still live in a situation of great unemployment and illiteracy. Most women do not speak Portuguese and illiteracy hinders their integration into specialized jobs.

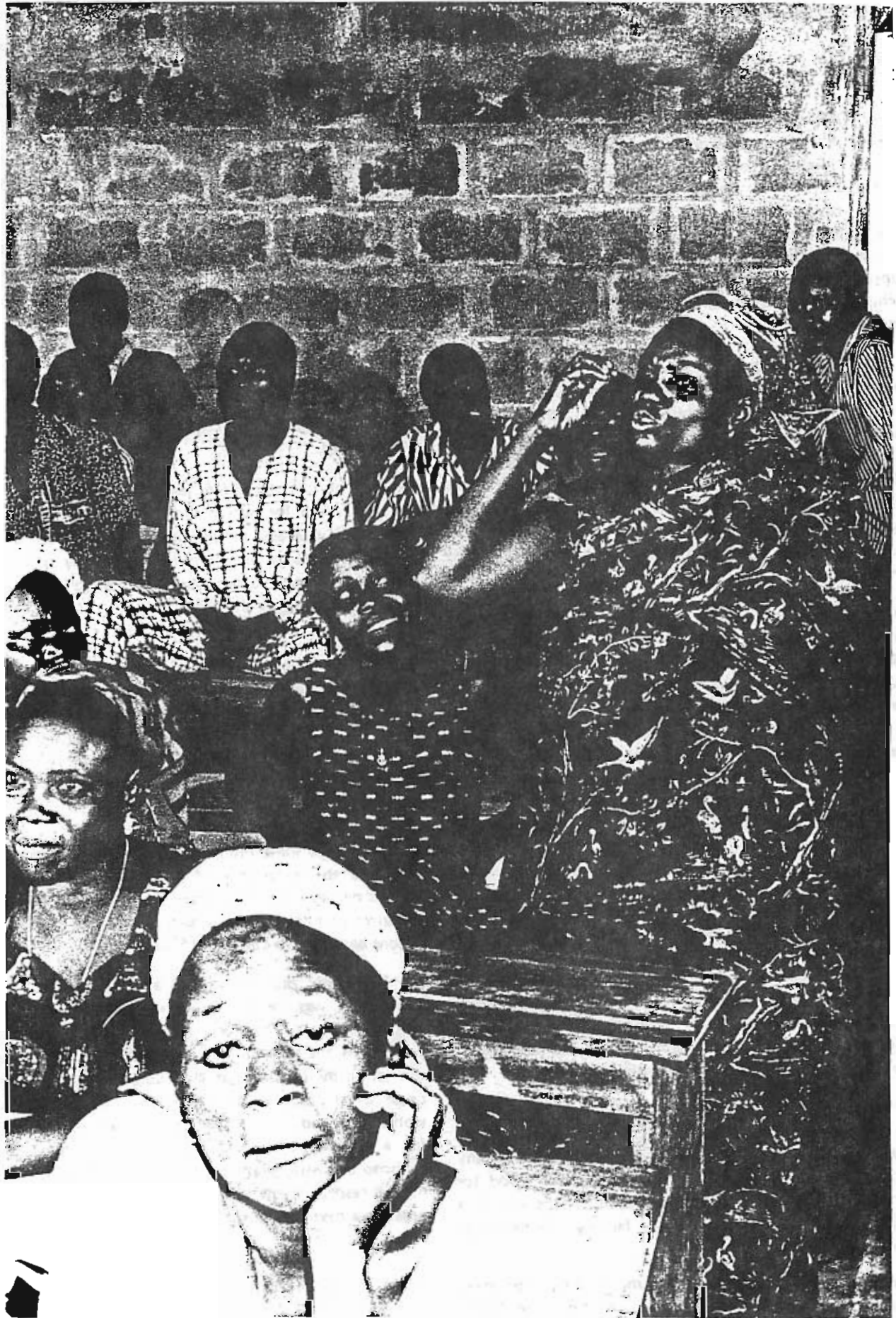
Because of this the OMM has organized literacy courses, in the first place for our activists and leaders. Today we have eliminated illiteracy in our provincial secretariats and most of these comrades are finishing elementary school. We also encourage women to participate in the political information courses promoted by the party.

The OMM is also creating work centers for women, such as cooperatives for sewing, raising rabbits and chickens, producing pottery, hairdressing. These are all easy to learn and permit women to achieve economic independence, a necessary condition for emancipation. We are also trying to organize creches at the place of work. The law permits two months maternity leave.

Q: In Europe some organizations establish as part of their programs the autonomy of the women's movement from various parties. On the contrary the OMM was founded on the initiative of Frelimo with which it is linked. What are the relations between the OMM and Frelimo?

A: The OMM did not arise as an autonomous initiative of women. It was, rather, an expression of Frelimo's will to liberate women. The party program has been assumed in practice by the *women*. The objective of Frelimo is the liberation of all the people from the exploitation which is also the cause of the oppression of women. The emancipation of women is linked to the liberation of all society. We are fighting for a new type of relations within the family, between husband and wife, relations of equality, possibilities to discuss, mutual respect. When we have reached this, we will be able to organize a new type of society. ■

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Photographer unknown

"WE CARRY A HEAVY LOAD"

Rural Women in Zimbabwe Speak Out

report of a survey carried out by the Zimbabwe Women's Bureau

INTRODUCTION

With the Independence of Zimbabwe and a Government committed "to enlist their (the people of Zimbabwe) participation and active support in the development process" (1), it is timely to look at the position of women in the rural areas. There has as yet been little information about this large section of the population, arguably the poorest and most neglected in the country. (2)

Conscious of this lack of attention, the Zimbabwe Women's Bureau undertook a survey of women's needs in the rural areas. The months June, July and August 1981 were selected for the fieldwork, as these are the slackest period in the rural areas, when the women would have time to spend with the interviewers and at meetings. The fieldwork covered 28 communal lands (formerly the Tribal Trust Lands) and two African Purchase Areas in eight Provinces of the country. The nine interviewers spoke with nearly 3,000 women during the survey. Interviews, both formal and using questionnaires, were conducted with individuals and groups in the three main languages: Shona, Ndebele and English.

The women ranged in age from late teens to late seventies. They included young women not yet married, a majority of married women (some of them in polygamous households), widows and divorcees. Many of the women interviewed were illiterate. Others, especially among the younger women, had some formal education and a few were teachers and nurses. By far the greatest majority could best be described as farmer-housewives.

The women were very enthusiastic about the survey, and anxious to give their views. Naturally, they also wanted to know how the information would be used, and if it was going to help them in any way. If there is to be any real improvement in the lives of rural women, information is needed on their present situation, as well as an understanding of the historical factors that have brought it about.

The arrival of the settlers at the end of the 19th century, and the dramatic transformation of African society that took place as a result of the destruction of the traditional economy affected women and men differently. The alienation of over half the country to the settlers and the imposition of taxes combined to force many peasant farmers off the land. Women were not at first drawn into the 'modern' sectors of the economy. It was the men who had to seek wage employment on the European farms and mines and in the growing urban areas. The women were left behind in the 'reserves,' the areas of the country now set aside for the majority of the population.

While the economic development taking place in the country allowed luxurious and privileged life-styles to the small white community, black women and their families were forced to live out a life of grinding poverty in the 'reserves'. These reserves (3), later called Tribal Trust Lands, were in the least fertile parts of the country. The poor soil, low rainfall and rapid overcrowding made low agricultural productivity inevitable. As women had to take on additional tasks previously performed by the men, life became a desperate struggle to feed and keep the family alive.

If new forms of subordination and oppression of rural women in Zimbabwe are to be avoided, the process of 'development' needs to be better understood and the results rigorously checked against women's actual position. In studies from other African countries (4), there seems to be a fairly general consensus that the most common result of 'development' has been the relegation of women to the subsistence sector in agriculture and low-paying jobs in manufacture and industry. Technology, credit and know-how have been concentrated in the hands of men, while women labour with little more than their hands to maintain the family.

Important questions to ask therefore about the situation of women in rural Zimbabwe are: what role do these women play, how is it integrated within the process of economic and social development, and has it benefitted the women themselves? Central to this will have to be a clearer understanding of how the penetration of capitalism has affected women.

As the survey was conducted little over a year after Independence, the views expressed still largely relate to situations which are a consequence of previous governments' policies. However, if the policies and programmes of an Independent Zimbabwe are to reflect the aspirations of these women, they must grow out of an understanding of the actual position of the women, based on information from the women themselves.

THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

There is generally a gross under-estimation of the economic value of women's activities in the rural areas of the developing countries. This arises for several reasons. To begin with, domestic work - so-called women's work - which includes a number of productive activities geared towards maintaining the family, is never counted as an economic activity. Secondly, the major role played by women in agricultural production is largely ignored. Thirdly, the role of women in the areas of small-scale trading of vegetables and handicrafts is frequently underrated.

This section of the report deals with women's role as producers - both of food for the families of wage workers (which include the next generation of workers), and of commodities for sale. A key issue in exploring this role will be women's relationship to the land. Different forms of ownership affect what kind of access people have to productive resources. Do women have the same rights over land as men?

It is insufficient, however, to look into the question of equality of access to land without taking into account women's access to other factors, for example transport, markets, finance, technology and know-how. Also important will be whether women have control over the output from their labour.

Women in Agriculture

Many of the difficulties encountered by women that they spoke of during the survey are largely the result of past colonial land policies - for example, both the quantity and quality of land. These problems affect all peasant farmers in the communal areas, regardless of whether they are men or women. A second group of problems that the women talked about - those revolving around women's relationship to the land - are specific to women. Although they are also in part a consequence of settler policies, they are also a result of the patriarchal values that preceded colonisation.

"Land itself is a great problem. We don't have enough of it."
(Tshatshani)

This was very often the first point made by the women. Many women said that they only had the stand around their houses to cultivate. This was usually about an acre, but sometimes even less. Four acres, the supposed minimum under colonial legislation, was considered a lot of land in many parts of the country.

What little land there was, was not always felt to be very fairly distributed by some women.

"Some people have bigger fields and gardens because the kraalheads favour their friends and relatives." (Chinamora)

The overcrowding in the communal areas has left many people completely landless.

"We are too crowded. Some of our sisters have no land at all. They want some land so that they can help themselves."
(Inyati)

Then there is the problem of the quality of the land itself. The majority of the population live in the least fertile and driest parts of the country. The already poor soil has been rendered even less productive by overuse.

"The soil is not good for cultivating. It is too sandy to be any good for crops."
(Inkosikazi)

"It is so dry here. We have very little rain. Sometimes our crops fail altogether because we have no rain."
(Mtoko)

With family welfare so dependent on women's contribution, women's relationship to the land is obviously an issue of great importance to them.

"The headmen won't give women any land. They say that we don't have any right to it."
(Lower Gwelo)

This point was very strongly expressed by a number of women from quite different parts of the country. The exception, although not everywhere, were widows. An example was the Chakohwa Irrigation Scheme in Maranke communal lands, where widows said that they were allowed to keep the land of their deceased husbands as long as they were strong enough to do the work. Quite a few of the people participating in this irrigation scheme, started in 1936 by missionaries, were in fact widows.

To get a clearer picture of women's relationship to the land, we asked the question "Do women have control over land?" The responses divided almost equally into having control and not having control. The three answers that follow illustrate the different reasons given by women for saying they did have control.

"Yes women have control over land because we depend on land most of the time." (Tshatshani)

"A wife controls the land because she does all the work, and she is the one who knows the right time to do things." (Mutambara)

"Yes women do have control over the land because we are the ones who work in the fields when our husbands are away working in the towns." (Honde Valley)

The reason given for not having control was the same as the reason given for having control - that it was the women who worked the land. The difference was over decision making: whether women were able to decide how the land was used.

"No we don't have control over land. The land is controlled by men. I say so because we are given 2 1/2 acres to plough, but our husbands do not allow us to plant anything except maize. So where shall we plant monkey nuts, beans and fruit that are good for our families?" (Inyati)

A number of women felt that direct Government intervention was needed to change the present situation of land being given only to men.

"We are fighting to have our own land and property. But we won't succeed without the Government stressing this need." (Mtoko)

The right to land is not always enough, however, if people do not respect that right.

"People do not respect things that belong to widows. I was left with a big orchard but people don't mind destroying it. They even open their gate and let their cattle in." (Mutambara)

Resettlement

At Independence, the Government inherited a situation of acute land shortage for the majority of the population. It has the task of fulfilling its electoral pledge to redistribute land to the people. The resettlement exercise has been underway for a year by the time of the survey. (18) The slowness with which it was seen to be proceeding was a frustration expressed by many women. Disappointment was also quite vocally expressed first about the fact that only men could fill in the application forms for resettlement (only in Mutambara did women say that they could fill in forms). Secondly, the fact that only men not engaged in waged employment could apply was seen as a problem.

Most women felt that these were unfair and discriminatory criteria to apply. They pointed out that they were the ones who did much, and sometimes all, of the farming. Land was therefore, in practical terms, of far more concern to them than their husbands. Concerning the criteria that only men not in waged employment were eligible, it was pointed out that men could be employed, but still be unable to send home sufficient money that was needed by the family. Some wives did not get any money from their husbands and were therefore entirely responsible for supporting their families from the land.

It was how to achieve greater productivity without more and better land that prompted the women to talk about resettlement. A resettlement meeting in Mtoko was reported in angry detail to the survey. The meeting, which was attended by

women and men, was told that to qualify for resettlement the head of the household (man) would have to have cattle, a scotch cart, a cultivator and a certain number of bags of maize. The warning was also made that if the resettled family did not prove themselves to be good farmers after two years, they would be chased away. In the meantime, the man would have forfeited his right to land in the communal area that they had left to be resettled.

These details had greatly worried the women who attended the meeting. What about widows, they asked? And those who had no property but would like to resettle in order to improve and help themselves? They said that it seemed that only rich people were being helped, and that women, widows, orphans and other poor families were being left aside.

Furthermore, some of the women felt that the contribution they made was going unacknowledged. The quote that follows illustrates the sense of anger and frustration that women are feeling.

"Why is it that only the names of men who have taken courses and have qualifications are being taken for resettlement? We women have also taken some courses, but they (the resettlement officers) are not taking our names. So it means that we women are not counted in any development activities being undertaken in Zimbabwe. We struggled much to win this Zimbabwe, but it seems that our Government has forgotten that and is not interested in women's development and needs." (Mtoko)

Difficulties Women Face as Producers

Whether producing for the families' own consumption or for sale, women have to overcome many difficulties. The unequal access to land has already been dealt with. This section will deal with some of the other major problems: transport, markets, finance, technology and know-how.

Transport

The problems of transport were mentioned by practically every woman. Long distances to walk and then long waits at the bus stop were very common complaints.

"We have to wake up at 1 or 2 a.m. to get to the bus stop in time to get buses into town." (Masembura)

Problems do not end having reached the bus stop. Infrequent and crowded buses make getting produce and handicrafts to town an exhaustive and time-consuming business. Furthermore, bus fares for the women and their boxes, tins or sacks often left little profit, and even a loss if prices are bad, or it took too long to get into town.

"Vegetables get rotten at bus stops because there are too few buses, and we have to wait too long." (Mtoko)

It was the same problem with cash crops.

"There is no transport for carrying cash crops to town. We have plenty of maize to sell, but we can't find any transport. We have to hire private cars for \$20 each trip. It's far too dear." (Chinamora)

Markets

A further disincentive to production that the women frequently mentioned was the problem of marketing. With fresh vegetables, the time factor is crucial. It can mean having to sell for almost nothing.

"We take vegetables to Umtali and we also sell them locally. The problem is that we have plenty of vegetables but nowhere to sell them. Sometimes a bundle has to be sold for as little as 5c, otherwise the vegetables will get rotten."
(Samanga)

It can also mean having to stay away from home for at least a night, sometimes longer.

"If we don't sell our vegetables in town the day we arrive, we have to stay overnight. Some of us have to sleep out in the open because there is nowhere for us to go. Sometimes we have to bring our small children with us. It's no good for them."
(Chinamora)

Another problem raised by the women was the disorganization at many markets. Sometimes the women were mobbed by vendors when the buses arrived at the market. They could have all their produce stolen in this scramble. There was also the danger of having their money stolen when they left the market after they had sold all their vegetables.

With handicrafts the same lack of organised marketing possibilities exists. In Victoria, the women make clay pots. Only a few manage to sell them to the craft shops. The others line their pots up along the side of the Fort Victoria to Beitbridge road, hoping to sell to passing tourists. Women in Lower Gwelo said that they had tried hawking their handicrafts in Gwelo but the police chased them away. Only in Biri Wiri, in Muwushu did the women have their own little craft shop, built by themselves, to sell their Gudza craft.

Marketing problems with cash crops were also raised. The women said that they wanted their own Grain Marketing Board cards. They said that the cards were presently in their husbands' names, which meant that the husband got all the money for crops that the women had partially or wholly produced.

Finance

The lack of finance for farming inputs - fertilizer, seeds and equipment - was mentioned by women everywhere.

"We know nothing about credits and loans. What we know is that we need money to improve our farming, so we should be taught about this."
(Victoria)

Other women said that they did know about credit and loans, but said:

"They are given to men only. But women also need farming credit to buy fertilizer."
(Chinamora)

In the same area, Chinamora, some of the women said they had received credit from Silveira House. (22)

"We are glad to have that assistance. It helps very much. We have a cooperative, and we are given fertilizer by Silveira House, which we pay for afterwards, after we have sold our crop." (Chinamora)

Some women talked about borrowing money from the rural stores.

"Sometimes we get loans from stores to buy seeds and fertilizer. But it is hard because most of the store owners don't like to give women loans. But where else can we get loans and credit?" (Honde Valley)

Rural stores are a very unreliable source of finance, and costly too. Borrowing from a store often meant that the women had to buy items from the store, plus repay their loans with high interest.

Technology

The great majority of women said they had to rely on very labour-intensive traditional methods of cultivating. Ploughing was either by hand using a hoe, or with cattle for the luckier women.

"Before the war we used cattle for ploughing. But we lost them all during the war. Now we have to use hoes." (Honde Valley)

Even those who have cattle still have a problem.

"Ploughing is done after the dry season when most of the cattle are very weak. There is no grazing land for the cattle so they have nothing to eat." (Victoria)

Lack of water, and the need for wells, boreholes and irrigation were even more widely mentioned.

"We are suffering from hunger. The soil is poor and the rainfall is very low. We can't do anything without irrigation." (Mhondoro)

Labour-saving devices that were mentioned by the women apart from those to do with cultivating were mainly to do with transport. Women have to transport extremely heavy loads - maize to the grinding mills, crops from the fields, and water and fuel - on their heads often for great distances. It is an exhausting business which they pointed out had to be done every day of the year, irrespective of the weather, being pregnant or simply not feeling well during menstruation.

"We need scotch carts and wheelbarrows to help us carry our crops, and water and firewood." (Mtoko)

Many of the wells were destroyed during the war. The women, particularly in the drier parts of the country, saw it as an absolute priority that they should be repaired, and more built.

"We have to walk for two hours to fetch water. The wells need to be fixed, and even new ones built to help us. We need clean water if our families are to be healthy."

(Tshatshani)

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the information gathered, it is clear that the majority of women in the rural areas play a very active role as unacknowledged producers, both for family consumption and for sale. The question therefore is not how to find ways of motivating these women, as it is often expressed. It is rather the necessity of finding ways of making their productivity less arduous, and for the fruits of women's labour to be under their control so that they can more directly benefit their own lives.

The central role that these women play in maintaining the family of the present labour force, which is also caring for the future labour force, is badly overlooked. This neglect has resulted in the increased oppression of women in the rural areas: more work with less resources, and declining rather than improving status. Women are seen as economic attachments to men; their contribution is still seen as supplementary, rather than absolutely vital, to the household's survival.

Many of the difficulties the women spoke of are problems of the communal lands in general. They are the result of the drastic underdevelopment that has occurred as the result of the policies of previous administrations. Such problems are the low productivity of the land and poor infrastructure. However, since women far outnumber men in the rural areas and many act as de facto heads of households, these problems have a specific relevance for them.

Furthermore, although it is necessary to look at households and locate the information within that context, account must be taken of the internal inequalities between different members of the household. The survey has confined itself to the views of the subjects of the survey - the women themselves - to provide information on their situation.

That women need to earn money was one of the strongest facts to emerge from the survey. The low wages earned by husbands frequently left women with the responsibility of finding the cash necessary for household essentials, children's uniforms and fees, and farming inputs.

The hindrance to women's production, both for family use and for sale, clearly stems from concrete obstacles - lack of finance, transport, markets and know-how - rather than laziness or conservative attitudes on the part of women.

The position of women under customary law, and the hardship it causes many women, was another clear fact to emerge. On the question of the minority status of women, the opinion overwhelmingly expressed was that women and men should have equal status and rights. Attitudes towards roora/lobola were more complex. Although many women were for its abolition, there were other women who saw it as the only safeguard they had in a society where families were already split by husbands working away from home.

The enthusiasm of women for education was universal. For adult literacy classes, for technical advice on farming, for home economics subjects - child care, nutrition, hygiene, etc. - as well as for primary schooling. Mothers' determination for their children, girls and boys, to attend school was shown by their concern to have ways of getting money so that they could finance this.

Finally, it was clear from what the women said that the attitudes of many men towards the emancipation of women were still very conservative. Although this was a source of conflict, it was not identified by women as a problem above all others. The difficulties women had with husbands were usually raised in connection with other problems, for example, the splitting up of families and the low wages of men.

Recommendations

In the Government's Economic Policy Statement 'Growth With Equity', the following objective is stated: "a rapid reduction in the levels of absolute poverty in the rural areas, together with accelerated improvement in the standards of living of the rural population." (24) The recommendations of this report follow Government in seeing this as an essential priority and continue by outlining areas in which changes with women specifically in mind are needed if women in the rural areas are to have any real improvement in their lives.

The recommendations are based on demands being made by the women themselves. It is important that planners listen to the voices of those being planned for. Throughout the survey, women talked not only of their problems; they also suggested ways of overcoming these problems. What they lacked was information, and an involvement in the debate on the future development of Zimbabwe. It is this fact that leads to the first recommendation.

(1) Access to Information

Both Government, through the mass media and other agencies, and voluntary organisations, through their programmes for women, should make every effort to ensure that rural women are both informed and involved in any changes being planned.

Government should take measures to improve the mass media and its relevance and accessibility to rural women. More programmes at suitable times and on subjects requested by rural women are needed on the radio. Mobile 'agitprop' vans to travel in the rural areas might be a way to reach the large number of women who said that they did not have radios. These vans should be equipped with visual and sound material as well as written material, to make sure that illiterate women are not excluded from information.

Women's organisations, through their clubs in the rural areas, have an important role to play in both the gathering and dissemination of information. It will only be through an involvement in the formulation of Government's policies that rural women will be motivated to actively participate in the programmes that emerge from these policies.

Returning to the raising of living standards as a priority for rural women, the following recommendations are seen as the means to achieving this goal.

(ii) Easier Access by Rural Women to the Means of Production

Central to this will be women's access to land. As much of peasant farming is carried out by women, as de facto heads of households, Government should review its resettlement policy of only giving permits to settle and cultivate to men. Furthermore, right to land in the existing communal lands should be extended to women who are actively acting as heads of households. Related to the question of land is the necessity for women to have equal access to credit and loans, technology and extension services.

(iii) Attention to Income-Generating Activities for Women

With practically every woman in the survey saying that it was necessary for her to earn money, ways of improving income-generating activities that already exist need to be found, as well as new possibilities created. This should involve both Government and voluntary organisations. Skills training programmes by both Government and voluntary organisations should become a priority, rather than the present emphasis on welfare activities. Skills training centres should be established in the rural areas, rather than in the urban centres where they already exist. Skills offered should be open to both sexes and there should be equal employment opportunities in the growth points being planned by Government in the rural areas.

The income generating activities that women are already engaged in - vegetable production, handicrafts, etc. - could be made more productive by the creation of better marketing structures. This would involve the establishment of rural markets, at both existing rural centres and at the new growth points being planned. This would overcome some of the present transport problems, and equally important, keep cash circulating in the rural areas. Improved transport between the rural areas and urban centres is also vital if peasant women producers are to be encouraged to increase output to feed the urban population. The organisation of collection points for produce to which women could deliver their vegetables and other items is something that local councils, and voluntary organisations, particularly cooperatives, should pay attention to.

(iv) Measures to Support Women's Desires to Make Good Their Lack of Education

In addition to skills training programmes, a national adult literacy programme is essential if other formal and non-formal educational opportunities are to be maximised by women. The literacy programme must be based on rural women's experiences and needs, and should be open to young and old alike.

(v) Measures to Improve Women's Health

The survey shows that rural women see the production and rearing of children as one of their major social roles. Thus, accessible, appropriate maternal and child care services which enable women to have safe childbirths and healthy children are a major need in rural areas.

On the issue of family planning/child spacing, the survey showed women to have different views. One general feature was the lack of information that women had about modern contraceptive methods. It is recommended that more information about different contraceptive measures be made available. Women will then be able to make a more informed choice on whether they want to space their families, and what method to choose. Community health workers should also make every effort to involve men in the discussions on family planning.

(vi) Participation of Women in Decision-Making

The discriminatory attitudes that have prevented women from holding any positions of responsibility in Local Government should urgently be redressed at District Council level. To counteract conservative attitudes that continue to prevent women from exercising their capabilities, it is recommended that a minimum number of seats on the local councils be set aside for women. The integration of women into the decision-making process is an absolute prerequisite to the social as well as economic development of the rural areas and the country as a whole.

(vii) The Legal Status of Women

An area that women mentioned as a specific oppression that they suffered was their legal status: the minority status of black women and the discriminatory practices in inheritance of property; divorce; child custody; and the position of women under traditional marriage.

Since the survey was conducted, Government has said that Bills dealing with these discriminatory practises will be presented to Parliament early in the new year. In light of these forthcoming legislative changes, it is recommended that every effort is made to keep rural women informed of the debate and the changes that result.

NOTES

1. Growth With Equity: An Economic Policy Statement.
2. Riddell Commission Report. Page 80, paragraph 358.
3. The work 'reserve' is used throughout the report as it was the word most commonly used by the women when referring to the communal lands.
4. Rogers, Barbara: The Domestication of Women.
18. At Independence, there were about 780,000 farming families in the peasant sector. Some 219,000 of these need to be resettled. In January 1981 only about 1,500 families had been resettled. (Riddell Commission Report, page 88, paragraph 400.)
22. Silveira House administered \$750.000 provided by the Agricultural Finance Corporation for 2,600 peasant farmers.
24. Growth With Equity: An Economic Policy Statement.

This paper has been excerpted from We Carry A Heavy Load: Rural Women in Zimbabwe Speak Out, a report of a survey carried out in December 1981 (one year after Independence) by the Zimbabwe Women's Bureau. The report was coordinated and compiled by Kate McCalman and published by the Zimbabwe Women's Bureau, 1526 Victoria Street, Salisbury (Tel. 703376).

AN INTERVIEW WITH TEURAI ROPA NHONGO AND DR. NAOMI NHIWATIWA,

Minister and Deputy Minister, respectively, of Community Development and Women's Affairs in Zimbabwe

conducted by Joellen Lambiotte
of the Boston Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa
April 1981 in Zimbabwe

Q: Why was the Women's Ministry created? And do you think that the fact that there's a Women's Ministry has implications for women in Zimbabwe in other parts of the Government?

NHONGO: You know that Naomi and I were involved in the armed struggle. The Government of Zimbabwe decided that we should continue to teach other women what we had been doing during the armed struggle so that they might better understand their role in the economic struggle of our country. So for us now, the task is to gather information. Today you are very lucky because the reception room is empty. But it's usually full of women with so many ideas, so many problems. Since our culture has neglected women it is high time women should come together and solve their problems or else find the reasons why women are being left behind. Women expect this Ministry to involve and represent women in different ministries and different governmental points of view, in different private sectors and so on. The Ministry will encourage the private sector and Government to employ as many women as possible, and try to improve some statutory laws which deprive women. This means that the Ministry has a lot to do in terms of improving the status of women as well as participating in the economic struggle of the country. I don't think there's any disadvantage which we will face in the near future. It's an advantage to us and an advantage to the Government because women are ready to compete with their male counterparts.

Q: For jobs and education?

NHONGO: Education, jobs and everything.

Q: So when women come to you, do they come to you as individuals as well as from the women's organization? If a woman has a problem, does she come to the Ministry?

NHONGO: Some come as individuals, but the individual problems also touch everybody. Some come on behalf of their organization.

Q: What is the status of the Women's Institute or the Women's Centers Project at this point?

NHIWATIWA: We had proposed to set up women's centers. There's one that started shortly after independence -- the Melfort Center. Its purpose is to design pro-

jects and to rehabilitate the female combatant, the freedom fighters. So far we have purchased a farm; after purchasing the farm we started getting women into the center from the assembly points of the freedom fighters so that we could start educational programs and personal dignity programs. But we have had some difficulty in the sense that it's a big center and running it requires substantial funds.

The farm project was sponsored by the Netherlands. We got some funds from the United States to assist us in training, for classes. But financing the maintenance of the farm, the feeding of the girls, the plumbing, lighting, equipment, bedding, that we cannot get support for anywhere, so it's difficult right now.

Q: What are the other specific government projects that are aiding in the emancipation of women?

NHIWATIWA: Government projects that are intended to aid the emancipation of women are the projects that are supposed to improve the whole standard of living of the Zimbabwean people. You see, when all people are oppressed, women tend to suffer more. When there are changes, when the standard and way of living are changed for the better, it also benefits women.

For example, the Government passed a bill to make sure that all children of Zimbabwe get free education. This improves the lot of women because many times women alone in rural areas work very hard to tend the gardens, the vegetables, the chickens, the eggs. However, instead of feeding their children, the women would sell the produce so they could finance sending their children to primary school. Now the children go to school free, so the women can use their wages to eat and provide better nourishment. In addition, because of our cultural upbringing, many families felt that since the man was the carrier of the family name, male children were to be educated first when money was limited. Now everybody goes to school, boys and girls, so we have made a gain.

The other area in which women have gained is health. All people earning a certain amount or less are entitled to free medication. This represents a tremendous improvement for women, particularly women in the rural areas, where income is nothing to speak of. Rural women can now go to hospital. When they or their children are ill, they know they will be attended. Psychologically, this guarantee provides an important reinforcement, reducing the level of anxiety.

Of course, the Government has categorically asserted that men and women have equal rights, and that it will take steps to bridge the gap by accelerating the development of women. I think many of these things are easier said than done. But the Government has set up the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs to guarantee that whatever we proclaim we can actually carry out in practice.

Q: So you see the formation of a Women's Ministry as a positive step?

NHIWATIWA: Oh, yes, because otherwise I think it would have been difficult. Our society has a very strong tradition; we are told we are women and should stay in the back; we should not speak out; we even look down upon our own women who would speak up. This is how we are brought up. Unless there's an institution or organization to actually say to women, 'It's ok,' it will be very difficult to overcome those cultural traditions, because of the oppression we've gone through and the difficulties we've had. That's the best we knew then, but now Zimbabwe is growing. It's a member of the international community and the Zimbabwean woman must be as developed as any other woman.

Q: So you don't think that women are going to become isolated and not have input into the other ministries:

NHIWATIWA: We won't allow it. The Zimbabwe women are talking, and that's exciting, very exciting. They're talking in the trade unions, in education, in employment. They're talking all over. They have refused to take second place in their country.

Q: How is the political education of men and women about women's roles and women's oppression occurring? Is there a specific educational program for that?

NHONGO: There is a plan, but the plan is not well established. We are creating a research team to determine the syllabus -- what kind of lessons, how are we going to approach our male counterparts -- which is very difficult.

Q: Is there education being done through the party also? Through ZANU, PF, is there political education about women being done through the party?

NHONGO: If we do it by party lines, it may confuse other people who belong to different parties. I think the Government will have to provide the guidelines so that the orientation will be accepted by everyone, regardless of party affiliation.

Q: Is lobolo being phased out?

NHIWATIWA: Lobolo is a very serious issue. We actually did research to assess people's attitude about lobolo. Lobolo has many variables. One of them is that it is an insignia showing that a man and a woman are married, even if they didn't go to church, even if they didn't officialize their marriage in court. If a man pays something to the woman's family and the family accepts, this symbolizes the unity of the families, and the fact that neither of the two partners now has the freedom to go elsewhere. If the family of the husband pays something to the family of the girl, the family of the girl will make sure the girl behaves as she's already somebody's wife. It is a union of families, not only of couples, so for the society as a whole, it becomes powerful in that sense.

Secondly, it is associated with income. Many people don't want to hear about it, but honestly, many families with girls worked hard so that their girls did well, that they became respectable girls, so that they would have some income. We are brought up to take care of our parents. When I was growing up, my parents made sure that I would do well so I could take care of them. They also made sure my brother did well so that he could eventually take care of them. But we hope that as the income level and standard of living increases, then parents will stop looking at their children as sources of income.

NHONGO: I personally don't feel that it's important to just stop it at once, but maybe the Government should assist the parents to reduce lobolo because of its disadvantage to us women. Sometimes a parent demands not less than the money which he can use to buy a tractor or a grinding mill or a shop, which I don't think is of good advantage to the married couple because they'll be facing so many difficulties in starting their new life. I think the Government should orient the parents not to charge so much. When this lobolo was started by our forefathers I think it was a means of tying the two families together. But now it may be something that is dividing the two families. It's now creating hatred between the two parents, the two families.

Q: How would you compare the conditions of women to men in this country?

NHIWATIWA: Our society did not believe that a woman should take a leading role in the family or in public. She should not speak in public, she should not ad-

dress people in any big organization where men are present. Our society did not believe a woman could take a position in which men would be subordinate to her.

Because of this, no steps were taken to prepare women to play the same role as men, both psychologically and physically. It was not considered necessary to send many women children to school; what purpose would it serve since she's going to become a wife? If the woman went to school at all, it was to become a better wife and not to take an important role in society. So girls attended school with limited vision. Marriage and men were the main thing, not leadership, not equality with men. Therefore, the gaps are outrageous.

We will probably be the only Ministry to appoint a woman permanent secretary. In the entire Government, there is only one woman cabinet minister and two deputies. This doesn't mean that we don't have educated women. In Zimbabwe today, we have close to 1,500 to 2,000 women with a bachelor's degree or more. But these women are young. A long time ago, women were not allowed to step outside tradition. You had to be a rebellious woman to attempt it and often your family life, your husband or your married life suffered so you had to sacrifice one side. Now in this new generation, we have highly skilled women who live within the traditional constraints, but we are hoping to build on this group. We plan to hold several seminars, saying where you have the skill, don't bury it, come out. But this is the situation we have inherited. It's not very acceptable in Zimbabwe to have women who talk as loud as I do.

Q: Do you face opposition because of the role you play?

NHIWATIWA: Of course, I face a lot of opposition from what I call non-progressive men. I don't espouse anything unusual, something that would disadvantage our country. We're concerned for the full participation of every citizen of Zimbabwe -- maximizing all our human resources for the development of our country. The people who oppose this development are non-progressive men and women still imprisoned by their culture. They feel they have no right to say, 'Excuse me, please, don't oppress me.' Somebody can just come and say, 'I want you to stand up and sit over there,' and you cannot say, 'I'm sorry, I don't want to.' Because this is the cocoon.

I myself was brought up in the old tradition. When I was in the U.S., my mother would write and say, now, that's enough education, you have only to be concerned with your husband and your marriage. I could have said yes, I will be like that. We were brought up not to sit on a chair. As soon as men come into a room, they sit on the chair; you sit on the floor. Even now when I go home, I am still told to sit on the floor, and the men whom I travel with, my driver and security guard, sit on chairs.

Q: How are the problems facing women ex-combatants different from those facing men ex-combatants? What are the similarities and what are the differences?

NHIWATIWA: Oh, the problems are very different. When women were in the battle field, they could command men. The line of command in the military is a relatively easy one: there is the commander, you follow the line of command. Women combatants learned to take leadership, to give commands and to expect that command to be followed. Now, they are told, 'No, you sit on the floor while the men sit over there.' All this represents a lot of adjustment for the women. They were young when they went in to the military, and now they also want to get married, to have boyfriends.

Q: They were teenagers?

NHIWATIWA: Yes, they were teenagers, and most of them want to get married. But if they want to get married, they must retrogress to where they consider themselves minors, unless they find very progressive men. You don't find a lot of male combatants looking for a female combatant as a possible wife. We see them looking for women who are civilians. And civilian men, because they believe they are the head of the house and their women minors, do not want a woman who was a commander. So it creates a predicament.

Q: So, there is a stigma against the women who fought?

NHIWATIWA: It's not a stigma. They are admired. But they are admired as soldiers, for their profession. But I don't know if these civilian men want to marry them.

NHONGO: You see, the conditions in which we lived when we were in the armed struggle were very different from the conditions in which most people lived. It's now quite difficult for the trained woman combatant to go and sit in the reserves and behave like an ordinary person. What the Ministry is planning to do is to try and organize some programs for these ex-guerillas and ex-guerilla women, that is, to provide training so they can be sent to the rural areas to train the masses. But just now, women ex-combatants are left free, either to go and visit their families or whatever. Within two days, she's back, saying, 'No, I can't stand that conditioning. It's impossible for me to associate myself with the people who are not trained.'

Q: You were a commander in the army? What do you feel are the important things that you gained from that?

NHONGO: What I gained during my command period was that I became more courageous and that woman's shyness went. I even became a better woman because I was facing so many problems and could solve them without any man's help. The training we received made us women feel the same or at equal levels with our counterparts, the male combatants. I think this led most of us women to participate even better than some of the men.

Q: What do you think is the most important contribution that solidarity groups in the United States can make towards the transformation of Zimbabwe at this point?

NHONGO: I think the most important thing solidarity groups in America could give is to assist us in integrating the women ex-combatants. Integration could be achieved by providing training in secretarial skills, in dress making, in economics, as electricians, so they can provide a much needed service in the rural areas. The solidarity groups could provide us with technical or humanitarian assistance.

Q: When you say that solidarity groups can provide technical assistance, what kind of technical assistance? Can you be more specific?

NHONGO: For instance, if you have scholarships to send women for further academic education or for specific vocational training. We would like to see our women trained as electricians, as builders, as plumbers, architects and so on.

NHIWATIWA: I just want to say thank you to the progressive community that supported us. They gave us a harbor to propagate our political position, and corners where we could cry as loud as we wanted. And we should say to them thank you, thank you very much.

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COURAGE, AFRICAN WOMAN.

In the twilight
In the sprawling hideout
Where I hold my crying
Hungry baby
Singing lullaby songs
During deserted nights
Cry I must not
For the future of
My children who lack paternity
Depends on me
I, African woman, responsible for her family

Used to bitterness in life
I, woman alone
Nkgoleleng banake—Nkgoleleng baAfrica

Courage I must not lose
Hopeful I am
That these children of mine
Will grow to be
Brave heroes
To lead their oppressed nation
Nkgoleleng banake—Nkgoleleng baAfrica

—Winnie Morolo



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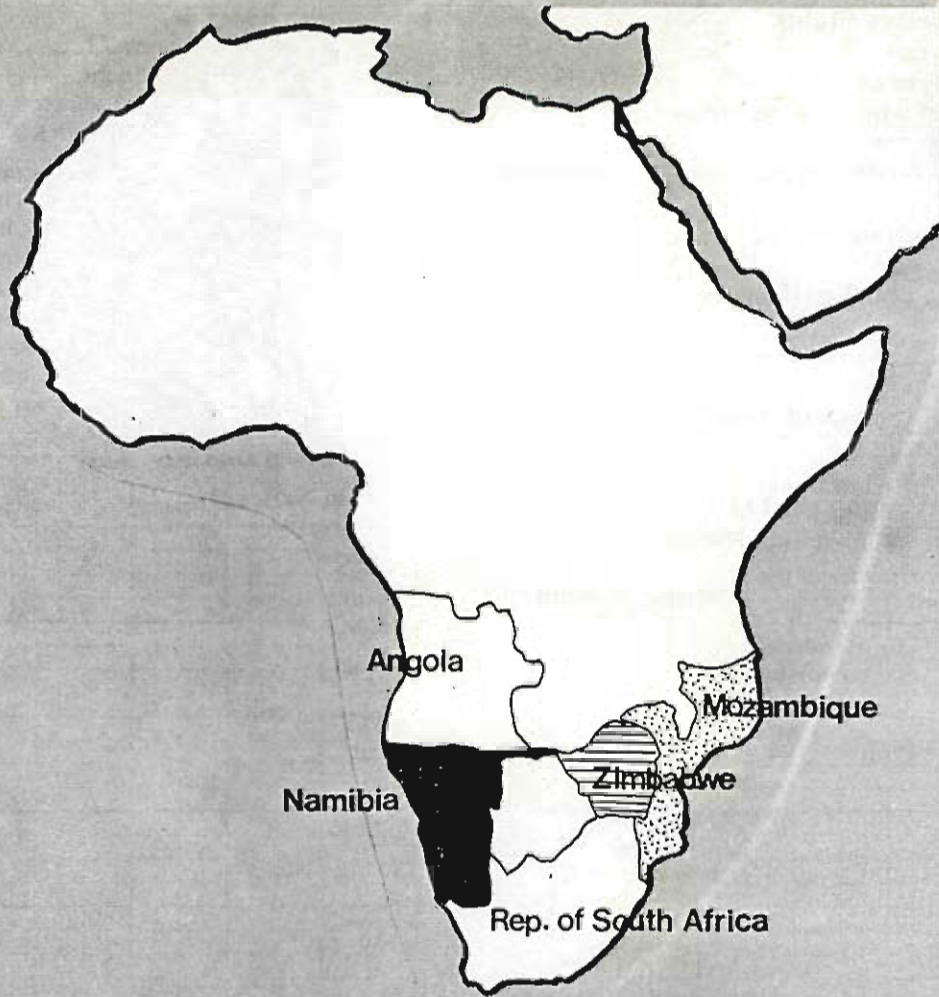
Photo: Soweto Uprising, 1976

Poem: By South African women poet—
first appeared in *Staffridei*, November-
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