



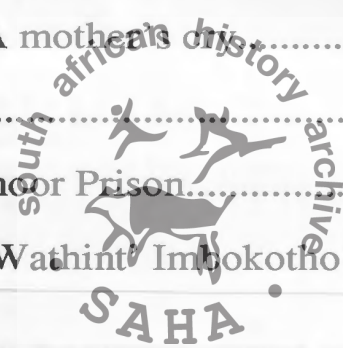
Issued by the Federation of Transvaal Women, 8th Floor,
Zambezi House, Von Weilligh Street, Johannesburg.
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**A WOMAN'S PLACE
IS IN THE
Struggle
NOT BEHIND BARS!**

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Acknowledgements: For all the women, named and nameless, whose lives are bound up in these pages.

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There are many things we wanted to write about. The contents of this book have been severely restricted in terms of the Emergency Regulations.

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Women in the struggle and under repression

Women have added intellect and muscle to many of the mass struggles against apartheid in recent years, renewing a tradition of resistance which flourished in the 1950s.

In urban squatter camps and rural villages, from the Cape Peninsula to the Northern Transvaal, they have mobilised against mass evictions and forced removals. Working in the homes of white families and living in backyards in the so-called white areas, they have come together as domestic workers to fight against the long hours and the pitiful pay which mark them as the most exploited sector of South African workers.

As heads of households, in many cases, they have taken decisions to support the rent boycotts which have been launched to hit out against segregated and inferior municipal authorities whose authority they reject.

They have similarly supported consumer boycotts of white-owned business, designed to push the business sector into taking a meaningful stance against apartheid.

Women students and girls in high school have stood in solidarity with their male counterparts in class boycotts maintained in support of demands of democratic control of education and non-discriminatory conditions of learning.

They have campaigned alongside men for an end to the system of military conscription for young white men.

Given this level of activism it is not surprising to hear that approximately 3050 women have been detained without trial under the emergency rule in the last year. Most of them have since been released. What is surprising is the fact that women comprise only 8 to 12 percent of the total number of people who have been detained in the crackdown against organisations which have spearheaded resistance to

apartheid.

The reason appears to lie partly in the fact that women are located principally among the rank and file and few of them rise to leadership levels in popular organisations. The incomplete representation of women in the structures of resistance has been acknowledged and challenged by women who support the United Democratic Front, the largest anti-apartheid alliance in the country.

The UDF, launched in 1983, is a grouping of about 600 organisations - some of them local in nature and others nationally organised. They include youth organisations, student groups, women's associations, trade unions, political bodies, service organisations and residents' associations. They share the ideal of a non-racial, unitary South Africa based on democratic principles.

The UDF Women's Congress, formed last year, is largely concerned with ensuring that "all campaigns of the Front are organised in such a way as to facilitate the maximum participation of women".

As the analysis of categories of women detainees given elsewhere in this document shows, the women who have been detained in the last year appear to be held for their roles within broader community organisations - not for the performance of distinct women's groups.

While women's groups are still highly regarded today, a new determination among activists to fight sexism along with racism and economic exploitation marks a departure from the established tradition of women's organisations within the anti-apartheid struggle.

The history of women's participation in South Africa is virtually as old as the formal constitution of the region as a nation-state. In the period between 1910 and 1920, black women participated in early campaigns against the dreaded "pass" - the document which allowed a limited number of black people access to the cities and to the jobs they offered.

In the same period, women participated in Mahatma Gandhi's early experiments in non-violent resistance, aimed at the restrictions on movement of Indian South Africans.

Some 40 years later, when massive passive resistance campaigns were launched against discriminatory legislation enacted by the white minority government, women were among those who defied racial laws and offered themselves up for arrest in their thousands.

This served as a preface to the most extensive and sustained campaign launched by women - the campaign against the extension of the "pass" system to women.

Marches on Government offices, isolated cases of "pass" burnings, work stayaways were among the methods women used to fight the Government as their officials moved from area to area and attempted to issue the hated document.

The campaign, organised by the Federation of South African Women which had been formed just two years earlier, climaxed with a mass march by 20 000 women on the Prime Minister's office in Pretoria in August 1956 to deliver masses of written protests to his doorstep. Finding Prime Minister Strydom's office empty, the women stood in silent protests for 30 minutes, before singing their defiant chant: "Strydom, you have tampered with the women - You have struck a rock - You have unleashed a boulder - And you will be crushed".

The protest and the anthem have passed into the folklore of political organisations. The structures of Fedsaw survived the test of time less well. It was a federal structure which had as its mainstay the Women's League of the African National Congress.

When the ANC was outlawed, Fedsaw was crippled and only last year have women's organisations regained sufficient ground to contemplate resuscitating the federation.

This does not mean that women have been inactive - but rather that their struggles have been focused on specific issues or channelled through more general

organisations.

In the famous Cape Town squatter settlement of Crossroads it was the women's committee that mobilised much early resistance against the destruction of the camp and the dispersal of its residents to impoverished and overcrowded rural reserves.

They were subjected to repeated arrests for trespass and for lacking the right "passes" to be in the area. They were deported en masse to the distant bantustans (reserves) and resolutely found their way home to Cape Town across hundreds of miles. As the Crossroads struggle became increasingly linked with the UDF and the radical youth movements, it was the women of New Crossroads who tried to prevent the onslaught of conservative elements among the menfolk against militant young "comrades".

Forced population removals across South Africa have drawn out the fire in women. In the Northern Transvaal area of Batlokwa - which won its battle against being uprooted - the story goes that women simply drew a line in the dust to divide themselves from the approaching removal squad and, farm implements in hand, challenged the officials to cross the line.

Where there have been mass detentions of children and menfolk, women have on occasions marched on police stations - in defiance of the law against all outdoor gatherings - to demand the release of their family members.

And, since residents' organisations - often known as "civic associations" - have become increasingly decentralised in structure, forming committees in every street and block of the most politicised townships, women have started to exert their influence on housing and neighbourhood issues.

A fair number of women have been arrested for street committee activities - which the Government views as subversive in intent and designed to supplant its own structures of authority.

In trade unions a small group of women have played a leading role as organisers and an increasing number are involved in shop floor representation. One of the two massive strikes sustained - and won - during the State of Emergency was fought largely by women working for a national retailing chain.

These are just a sample of typical resistance activities in which women have joined. Some occurred well before the State of Emergency and detention was not a consequence of the action. In other cases, key figures certainly found their way into detention cells.

COP RAPED ME



PICTURE POWER
A picture to touch every mother's heart
The tiny tot who was born in detention

Woman tells of barracks sex

A 21-YEAR-OLD Soweto woman who was arrested at a wedding together with 12 other people for "drinking liquor in a bebeen" has laid a charge of rape after she was allegedly forced to have sex with a policeman inside the barracks of Moroka Police Station in Soweto.

By SY MAKARI...

Diepkloof warden restrained

South African history
BY SANDILE MEMELA
THE Johannesburg Supreme Court has granted an interdict restraining wardens at Diepkloof Prison from further assaulting emergency detainees.
Five detainees made an application for the interdict after allegedly being beaten with batons, kicked, punched and tear-gassed inside cells and harassed by wardens.
The five detainees - Abey Mokone, 23,

Gilmore Anderson, 20, Moses Ratlou, 16, Joseph Morathela and Eric Masia, 16 - are held under emergency regulations.
The interdict determines that:
● There should be no common law infringement of detainees.
● A doctor should visit and examine detainees immediately and report to the court.
● The prison commander should read the interdict to the detainees.

Neo and tiny Ntebaleng were under police guard in the 1

Women's Day Song

Celebrate our women in campaigns
Celebrate our women in the jails
Celebrate our women over many fighting years
Celebrate our women for their triumphs and for their tears.

Remember all our women in campaigns
Remember all our women in jails
Remember all our women over many fighting years
Remember all our women for their triumphs and for their tears

There is no struggle
From which women are exempt
no struggle in which women
do not play their part;
our struggle is in fact
for women's day,
to struggle for tomorrow
is a woman's fight today.

Fight for an Africa
where women are no slaves
Fight for an Africa where women
do not waste their lives
South Africa in fact
is on its way to celebrate its
freedom
and to honour women's day

Effects of the State of Emergency on women

1. JUNE MLANGENI

Fedtraw

(This is a speech delivered at a press conference on 11 December 1987 to mark 18 months of the State of Emergency and to launch the "Unlock Apartheid's Jails" campaign)

My dear brothers and sisters, we are facing 18 months of a siege as people; this way of life which forces us to live like caged animals in our own homes is called a State of Emergency. As women we have to put up with our homes being raided by strangers.

We constantly wait for the knock on the door at ungodly hours, that knock which will take away yet another child.

We sit in our homes day after day wondering what is happening to our children who are in prison and those who live as moles underground because they must continue with our struggle.

The effect of this type of worry causes the worst heartbreak any person can endure.

On another level, women, like all other historians in our country face exactly the same forms of repression meted out by the government. Women are detained and kept away from their families for months on end.

At home their absence as mothers creates problems for the family and the daughters who are detained create worry because of the constant fear that they may be raped or killed by the police. The fear that other children may be accused by a legal system which protects the rights of a minority is always there.

I know that in the 1960's when the first emergency was declared we struggled as people to group together again - this time we are still going to continue our struggle for freedom even if they detain us all. Do you know, brothers and sisters, this government has robbed us of everything we hold dear.

The emergency detainees can only be visited once every 14 days for 30 minutes - we are being robbed of watching our children grow and they are locked away from us.

Women, as you know, and in particular black women, have long passed the days when we were dependent on others for an economic existence, and the State of Emergency affects even this part of our lives - when we visit children we have to take unpaid leave - this only means less food can be bought.

Consider my own life as a woman. I have lived under a State of Emergency for 24 years - my life is not my own - I can see the man I love only when the state says so and I have had to raise my children on my own.

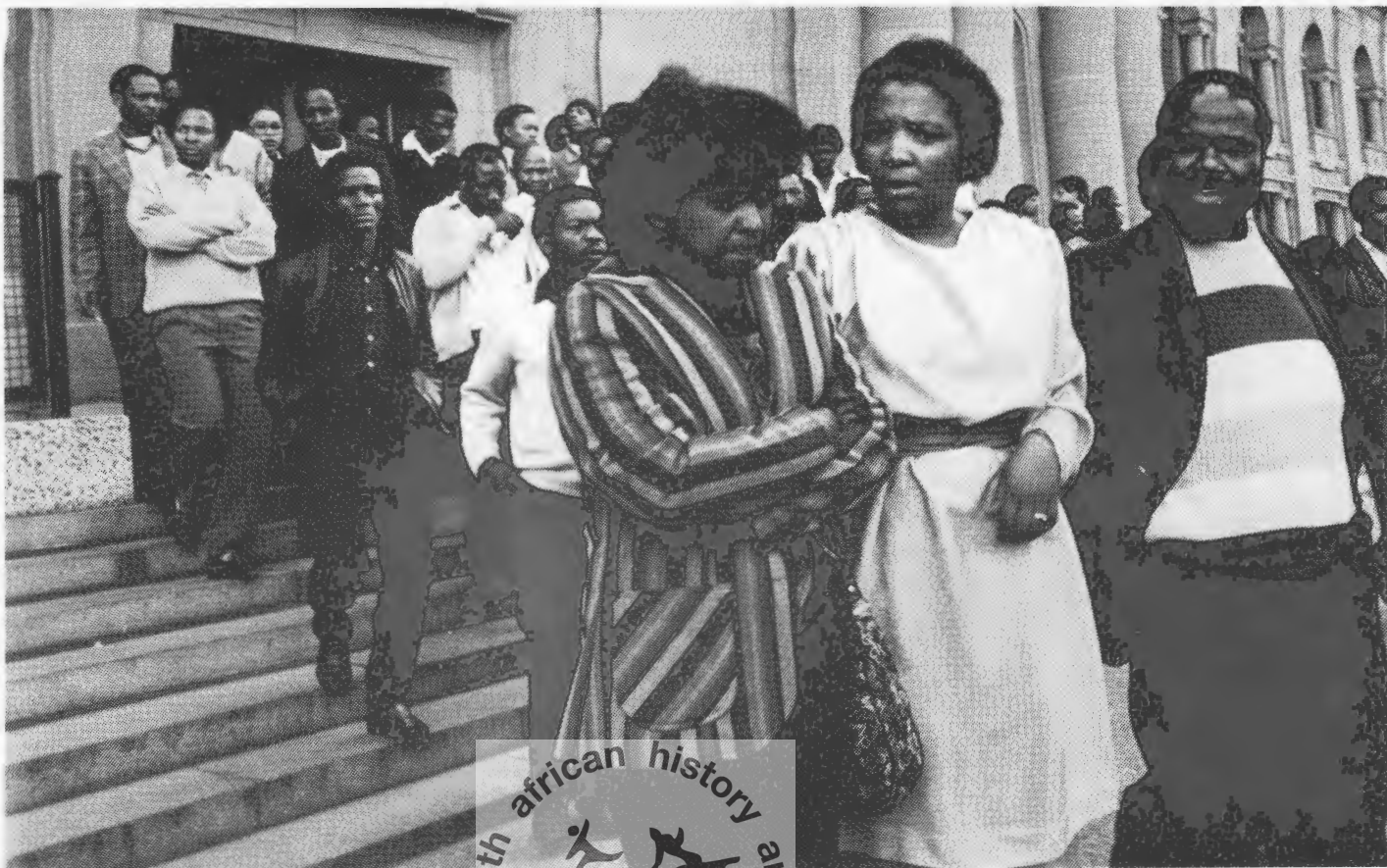
No government has the right to do this to human beings who ask only for what is rightly theirs: Freedom!

The State of Emergency is affecting all of us: you, me and even the government.

Worst of all it is the people who have to defend it in the townships - those youngsters who search our homes and even our bodies - those youngsters who are brainwashed into believing that blacks are monsters.

We as women say:

- Away with the State of Emergency.
 - Unban the organisation of the people and give our leaders back to us.
 - No State of Emergency will ever crush the will of the people of South Africa!
-



'Without Moses, it is very hard...' — Khola Mayekiso

2. KHOLA MAYEKISO

Khola Mayekiso is the wife of detained trade union leader Moses Mayekiso, currently on trial for treason after spending more than 6 months in prison, detained without charge.

Since he has been in detention, she has been solely responsible for the support of her parents, his parents, the youngest boy in Moses's family who is still a scholar; as well as having to make provision for their 7 children.

Since his detention the children had to be sent to relatives to be cared for. They are staying a long way from Khola's home, and she rarely sees them. It is an expensive trip that takes time and money to make.

Because she is known as the wife of Mayekiso, her life has been spent away from home since the "unrest" events in Alexandra in 1986 that led to Mayekiso's detention. Her own safety is a major concern. Many people continue to be detained, arrested or abducted; some just disappear in the night.

Separated from her children, her home, and her husband, Khola has had to continue to work to support the large extended family as well as find the time and transport to make the trip to prison to visit her husband and brother-in-law.

As Moses was detained under Section 29 until he was charged, it was more than 6 months before Khola could see her husband. She can now only see him twice a week for 30 minutes.

Not only is she concerned with her own situation, but the families of many other detainees come to her to ask for her help for money or transport so that they can see their relatives who are also in detention. She helps when she can but resources must come from her own pocket. There is not enough to go around. So she must try to cope with their frustrations and pain as well as her own.

And besides facing all these problems, she must face them alone. "Without Moses, it is very, very hard".



A service for detained men, women and children in Soshanguve, 1984

Women's experiences in detention



General conditions

The general problems that all detainees and convicted prisoners experience in detention vary from prison to prison and often depend on the nature of their detention (Emergency, Internal Security Act, Awaiting Trial or Convicted). Conditions will also vary depending on whether people are detained in a modern prison or a local police station.

Many of the problems reported relate to general living conditions. The National Medical and Dental Association (NAMDA) operates a service for ex-detainees that provides basic medical and psychological care to people once they are released.

They report that cramped cells, unhygienic environments and inadequate food of poor quality are common complaints for all detainees.

While detainees often complain about the lack of privacy in open cells, all detainees report a preference for communal cells where some form of "normal" inter-personal relations could be maintained. At the expense of privacy and the tensions that resulted from long-term incarceration with the same people, at least communal cells provide the warmth and support of human contact.

Generalised complaints of lower abdominal pain, dizzy spells, back and neck aches, and anxiety and depression are often reported upon release. A pervading anxiety resulted for many women from the omnipresent threat of torture, even for those who were not themselves interrogated or tortured. Recurrent nightmares were common. Psychological counsellors who see distressed ex-detainees report that a disproportionate number of women are seeking this service.

While many of these problems are experienced by all detainees; problems specific to women have been reported by many women in detention.

Specific conditions reported by women in detention

- Sanitation

Women tend to object more than men to dirty cells, broken toilets, bucket toilets, lack of adequate ablution facilities, lack of soap, shampoo, towels. Detainees must usually buy their own toiletry items with the little amount of spending money that they are permitted per week, if indeed they have access to the prison shop with high prices and few items. Women may be given no sanitary towels when menstruating, or perhaps only three per woman per period.

Bedding may not be changed regularly, and often sheets are not provided at all. These conditions will vary, depending on the location of incarceration.

- Diet

All detainees complain about the quality of food in prison. Breakfast may consist of weak tea or coffee with bread; lunch may be pap and soya or mealie meal with tea or coffee and bread, sometimes with jam; supper may consist of some type of meat (not always) with cabbage or in a watery stew. Once a week there may be fish or eggs, sometimes with an apple on Sundays. Supper may often be given before 16h00, with nothing until 7h00 the next morning.

If detainees or prisoners have the money and access to the prison shop, they may supplement their prison fare, but depending on the day that purchases are allowed, the tinned food is often reported as having gone off, and fresh fruit and vegetables are not available. Some women in prison have reported special dietary problems which are exacerbated because of the poor diet and lack of proper treatment.

In the 18 months before Trish Hanekom was released from prison, she developed a severe allergy to many types of food. Her diet was not supplemented; only the items that she could not eat were removed. She became ill and her weight dropped to 42 kilos before her diet was changed. Her fellow prisoners were not permitted to share their food with her.

- "Privileges"

Depending on the nature of detention and the location, exercise may consist of anywhere from 10 minutes per day to several hours. While the only facility may be access to a communal cement court yard, several women have reported experiencing problems from trying to jog or exercise on concrete. However, those injuries are far preferable to being only permitted to be outside for 10 minutes a day.

Study privileges and newspapers must be fought for, for awaiting trial prisoners or detainees. Those held in solitary confinement under security legislation have no access to books, newspapers, letters, study privileges, or any contact with the "outside world".

- Pregnancy

The issue of pregnancy for women in detention is a very serious one. Some women are pregnant when they are first detained. If the women do not miscarry, they must carry their pregnancy to term, often under intolerable conditions.

The medical attention they receive - if, in fact, they receive any - is poor. Women have been beaten and tortured while they are already in poor health resulting from pregnancy without adequate care, food, medical attention, and exercise. Women have had to give birth under prison conditions. When they have not been released, they must either try to care for their infants under the same bad conditions, or be separated from their infants at a time when the health of mother and child depend on their being together. Often for these young women, no more than children themselves, this is their first experience of childbirth, with which they must cope alone and without the support and comfort of family and friends. A

common experience for women who are detained while pregnant is miscarriage. They may miscarry as a result of assault, torture, lack of medical care, or the stress of detention.

Little medical attention is available and hospitalization is not common, so that routine checks for infection and other side-effects are not done.

Recently, the local press reported a case of a politically active grandmother whose daughter delivered a child while in detention. The authorities offered to release the baby to her care but she refused on the grounds that the infant needed the care that only a mother could provide, whether in prison or not.

These are some of the cases which have been reported to the DPSC in recent months:

- A 27-year-old woman, four months pregnant, who was taken to a police station, stripped naked to waist and assaulted and tortured, while a wet sack was placed over her head.

- A young woman, detained when 3 months pregnant, who was kept in detention until almost 9 months pregnant. She was interrogated with hooding and electric shocks.

- A 20-year-old woman, detained for 3 weeks while 8 months pregnant, was given inadequate medical treatment while in detention.

- A 20-year-old woman from Bhongolethu, detained when 7 months pregnant, was held for a month in a cell with 41 others. She only had wet blankets on cement floor to sleep on. No special care was given, and she was only examined once by a doctor. Her diet was very poor - porridge at 7h00, bread and soft drink at 12h30, and a soup with cabbage and a piece of meat at 16h30.

- A woman who shared a cell with 17 others, one of 33 women in 2 cells. Some only had mattresses on the floor — there were no beds. In that time, 2 women suffered miscarriages without any hospitalisation, and it was difficult to see the District Surgeon.

- A 24-year-old woman who had a miscarriage in prison and was taken to hospital for treatment, then immediately returned to her cell.

- An 18-year-old woman who was detained and interrogated when 5 months pregnant. When her cell mates demanded her release, all were teargassed in the cell. She became quite ill from this and was hospitalised for a time. She gave birth in the prison hospital but was not allowed to receive clothes for the baby, or see any family visitors. She was returned to prison with her baby. After the baby became ill and was hospitalised, she was released with a restriction order.

- A 21-year-old woman from Munsieville who was released shortly before the birth of her child, after 6 months in detention. She, too, was released with a restriction order.

Mothers say: "I went to the hospital to enquire about my daughter and I was told that she had been taken back to prison. I am shattered by the whole experience because my daughter is still young and this is her first child."

"She got caught in the teargas and her face and eyes were badly swollen. I was terribly worried and fearful that she would lose the baby."

Police say: A spokesman for the police public relations directorate said: All detainees in police cells receive adequate medical attention and where they are in late pregnancy they are usually transferred to a prison with in-house medical facilities.

With reference to the incarceration of babies with their mothers, it must be stated clearly that it is the policy of the SA Prison Service to admit to prison with female prisoners their infants who are wholly or partially dependent on breast-feeding and to accommodate them at state expense for as long as it is considered essential.



'Women are separated from their children at home when they are detained...'

Children

One aspect of children in detention is the very detention of young children and the subjecting of children, often female children, to assault, torture, isolation. But the issue of children in detention also affects women. Women who have given birth in detention have had to either keep their infants with them under appalling conditions, or have their children taken away from them. Women are separated from their children at home when they are detained, many worrying for weeks or months about who is caring for their children.

Children are traumatized and affected by seeing their mothers being detained, or just not knowing or understanding why their mothers have suddenly disappeared.

- Police refused to take the 4 month old baby of a woman they were detaining, even though the infant was still being breastfed. The baby was

left alone in the house with a 9-year-old sister.

- A two-year old child spent 8 months in detention with his mother. As his mother was unable to breastfeed him once he became ill, he received the same diet as the adults - samp, beans, mealie rice, and no milk. Only after all the women in the cells had protested when the child had loose bowels, was vomiting and had grown inert, did the prison officials finally send him to hospital. Following this report, the SA Prison Services wrote to the Weekly Mail complaining of the inaccuracy of the report, saying the child had been regularly examined by doctors and that the mother never complained about his health. They stated that it was their policy to allow infants who are dependent on breast-feeding to be admitted with their mothers and to accommodate them at state expense for as long as it is considered necessary.

- A set of 9-month-old twins and their two-year-old sister were "orphaned" after the detention of their mother, when she disappeared. Not only does this affect the children, but it must cause enormous stress to the mother, who has no information about her children.

- One woman had a 10-month-old child with her in solitary confinement.

Sexual assault

While it may be common knowledge that women have been sexually assaulted in prisons, in police stations, in security forces vehicles, and in their homes, women are afraid to talk about these assaults. It is surmised that they may be threatened with reprisals or even death if they do so. Unsubstantiated allegations of sexual assault do not differ from other forms of assault and torture in detention in the sense that there are often no witnesses and people are warned not to talk.

One common occurrence in detention for women is the sexual assault of stripping and body searches. Body searches and vaginal examinations are performed on women, apparently for no reason but that of harassment. Aside from the humiliation and embarrassment caused to women, infection and other complaints can result from such treatment.

- A group of 18-year-old girls was kept in solitary confinement for 3 months, subjected to daily stripping and 'body searches'.

- The Sowetan reported that a 21-year-old woman laid a charge against a policeman after she was allegedly forced to have sex with him inside the barracks of Moroka Police Station in Soweto, after being picked up with 12 other people for 'drinking liquor in a shebeen'. "He said if I went with him he would drop the charge against me. I was scared that he would hit me again, and so I could not refuse", the woman said in her affidavit.

- A municipal policeman and 4 others smothered a woman with a plastic bag, ordered her to strip, pulled her breasts, forced her to have intercourse with another prisoner, and forced a baton into her while she was held down spreadeagled. When she was released the next day, she was warned by the policemen that if she laid a complaint, she would be necklaced.

Assault and torture

Allegations by detainees of assault and torture in detention are not uncommon. It would appear that young women and girls are often assaulted. There is intense pressure, often physical, placed on detainees to become informers, state witnesses, or to confess to "crimes" they have not committed. Torture is used to elicit such actions from especially young and vulnerable detainees.

- A 15-year-old girl was assaulted when arrested, spending 3 days in hospital. When her mother visited her in prison, she saw sjambok marks on her neck and shoulders.

- A 16-year-old girl was interrogated with torture and electric shock. She refused to become a state witness and an informer and was locked in a mortuary for 30 minutes.
- A 16-year-old girl, during interrogation, was taken outside, stripped, had water poured over her, and denied food for the first 16 hours of detention.
- A 15-year-old girl was held in solitary confinement. Tear gas was poured into her cell while she was asleep. She suffered a swollen face, and pain in her stomach and chest.
- A young female child was arrested with 7 others and charged with arson. They were forced to sign statements with unknown contents at the charge office where they were assaulted. Her mother said she had whip marks all over her body.
- A middle-aged woman was assaulted while being detained. After being charged, she was refused the right to lay a charge. She was badly bruised, had blood in her urine, a swollen face and loose teeth.
- A 15-year-old girl was tortured with electric shock by police and administration board officials.
- A 14-year-old girl was detained and beaten for 3 hours with a sjambok. No medical treatment resulted in bad scarring.
- A 16-year-old girl was detained and beaten; police held her down while she was being given electric shocks.

Women in the community as victims

The conditions of women in detention are only one aspect of the repression that women face. Women in the community are often the victims of assaults, vigilante attacks, house burnings, shootings. Security forces and very often, municipal police or "kitskonstabels" are perpetrators of open brutality, random harassment, and attacks on the families and homes of activists. Since so many activists have been detained, or have disappeared, repression against their families has become a trend. Family members are sometimes taken as hostages in order to elicit information about activists' whereabouts. Masked informers are used to identify people and "wanted" lists are circulated. Rumours and false information manipulated by state forces create fear and mistrust in terrorized communities.

Women are affected by the detention, assault and disappearance of their family members. Often it is the sole breadwinner of an extended family that is detained or killed.

Women are victims as community members, wives, mothers, and as activists.

Vigilante action has been responsible for the killing and raping of many women. The brutal murder of Victoria Mxenge in Natal in 1985, a leading lawyer and leader in both UDF and NOW, whose husband was also murdered by unknown vigilantes, has never been solved.

- Police arrived at a woman's home looking for her son. They assaulted her and her two young daughters in order to find out where the son was. One daughter was forced into the boot of a car and threatened with imprisonment if she did not give them the information.
- A 12-year-old girl was shot in the back while walking home from the shop. She was hospitalised for one month under police guard, prior to being taken to prison. The doctors said that they could not remove the bullet for fear of paralysis. She was given a 5-year suspended sentence for stone-throwing.
- A 24-year-old woman was shot while walking home from the shop. She was detained in isolation for 2 weeks with 100 pellets in her legs, and no medical treatment. Upon her release, she found that she had lost her job as a domestic worker.

There have been many counts of women having had their homes burnt and

destroyed, often while the security forces were in search of their sons or husbands. When shacks are demolished and destroyed, it is usually women and their children who suffer and have to move, rebuild their homes, and try to provide for their families.

- Three policeman abducted a woman, her infant and her husband.

On the way to the police station, they stopped the vehicle to assault her husband. He tried to run away, and was shot five times in the chest. The woman was taken home; her husband lay in the veld. The police phoned for a van to take the body to the mortuary.

- Two 65-year old women, both grannies, were detained for 9 months.

One of them was undergoing treatment for high blood pressure and rheumatism at the time. "It was my first experience in police detention for any reason and was certainly very unpleasant". But despite her detention, it "will not deter me from continuing in the (street) committee."

Mothers, fathers, and wives of emergency detainees have told of their anguish at being removed from their loved ones. One woman told of the effect on her children of being separated from their father, as "totally disastrous". "My children miss a father figure in their lives".

Families have had to cope with their emotional anger, helplessness and despair at the detention of their loved ones. Families have been torn apart, and must learn to deal with the bureaucracy of the system that will hopefully allow them access to see their family members. Many women have had their husbands, sons, daughters in detention; killed; maimed; or leave the country. Mothers of white detainees speak about their awareness that they have had a privileged position in access to their detained family members and their ability to afford legal help and access to international pressure.

"Until it actually touches you, you don't realise how painful it is. A part of you is gone, completely vanished. The experience completely changes what comes before and what comes after." Molly Bill

Even when access is permitted, transportation for the wives, mothers and sisters to prison is difficult. The prisons are often far away from their homes, transportation is expensive, and women are working to try to support their families, or busy taking care of other children and family members. The financial burden of caring for the rest of the family, and of trying to purchase permissible items for detainees, often falls to the women. Women must learn to cope with the bureaucracy of the prison system.

"After we learned what had happened to my son, that he had been detained, it was 6 months before we could see him. I didn't understand what they thought that he had done wrong. We made 3 applications to visit him and went many times to the prison to try to see him. Finally, they let us see him and take him clothes. Then we learned that he had gone on a hunger strike to make them let him see his family."



Cries of Freedom

This poem was delivered to a woman in detention written for her by a young girl in the next door cell.

Cries of freedom, I seem to hear a
 crack of a whip
 and a whine of a grenade at the same
 time
 I seem to hear a long cry of an old
 woman
 Basi Ndiqolele Andinalo I Pasa

Shh! Listen!
 Cries of freedom
 Cries that will soon come to an end
 If cries do not come to an end
 Africa has to speak of more death

And Africa has to speak of revenge
 We sought equal rights and equal
 education
 We sought SRC's and we found it
 We found it with the carried bodies
 of Solomon Mahlangu and Emma
 Sathekge

I seem to hear an oozing of blood
 As the power of full rain in the
 summer
 Another victim of apartheid is crying
 Cries of freedom.

The women speak: Being detained

The wife's tale

My husband was detained the morning the state of emergency was declared. We had been expecting the worst and I should have been prepared for what was to come. Yet, when it happened, I was shocked, numbed and angry. I was filled with a sense of insecurity and fear. I was alone with a small baby. How would I be able to cope by myself? But worst of all, I had no idea where my husband was being held.

At first it was hard to get on with the normal business of living; of going to work, cooking meals and coping with our small baby, of writing letters to find out where my husband was being held. When, eventually, I learned where he was it was somehow comforting to think of him in some place somewhere. He had not simply disappeared into the night, never to return again. Yet I was still filled with fear. What could they be doing to him? I had heard so many stories.

To begin with I felt immobilised. But there were a lot of practical things to do such as contacting the DPSC, seeing lawyers and taking clothes and money to my husband once I knew where he was. All this activity gave me a sense of being in control of my life again. It made me feel I was fighting back for my husband and our baby in some small way, no matter how small.

Our family was fortunate because it did not suffer many of the tensions that are the common experience of other families in this situation. For many families, detention can mean the loss of a breadwinner. There is the rent to be paid and food to be bought. There is the fear that the detainee will lose his/her job, or parents worry whether their child will be able to continue with school. Often the family is so stressed that its members cannot give one another support. Young children may become clingy, demanding or aggressive. I often became angry and resentful at being so powerless.

In the midst of everything, there was always a bright moment. A visit to my husband, an article in the newspaper about someone released after a court ruling that the detention was unlawful. But the waiting continued.

It was important for me to clarify my own feelings about my husband's political involvement. It is normal at times like these to feel that the price one is being asked to pay is too great; to doubt one's own stand. When I confronted this fully I said to myself: "I believe in the justness of your cause. I respect what you believe in. For it is also my cause." This gave me great strength. It helped me accept what I was feeling. It helped me to cope with my depression and doubts. If I was feeling down I talked to my friends. I was not afraid to ask for help and support if I needed it. It was also important for me to keep in touch with others who were in the same situation.

Wherever I went I carried my candle of hope. Sometimes my little flame flickered brightly. At other times it was not so bright. My candle of hope helped me to believe that one day justice will prevail. It gave me an awareness that we are walking on a great road to a new South Africa where there will be peace and friendship for all.

Imagine my joy when our family was reunited six weeks after my husband was first detained. He was thrilled to see his baby again.



A mother, baby and detained child: 'All we have is this photograph.'

Sister Mary Bernard Ncube

Sister Bernard is a 53-year-old nun who lives in St. Mary's Convent in Kagiso, Krugersdorp. She is known throughout her community with deep affection as 'Mma Rona' (Our Mother) - the mother of Kagiso. She is a member of the Companian of St. Angela of the Diocese and Congregation of Johannesburg. Sister Bernard has been a nun since 1955. She comes from a deeply religious Catholic family and has always been known as a deeply spiritual person with a commitment to her community and especially to women. She was elected president of Feddraw in 1984.

She is the only nun ever to be charged with political offences in South Africa, and she is currently on trial, charged with subversion, sedition, and assault, along with 13 other residents from Kagiso and Munsieville.

"I was detained on the eve of the State of Emergency in June 1986. I did not have time to put my things together and could only take a few of the supplies that I knew I would need. They took me to the police station and there I saw many of my friends from the community who had also been detained. We then knew that there was to be another State of Emergency, but we did not know how long we were going to be detained."

Sister Bernard was held in solitary confinement under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act for over one year, spending a total of 16 months in detention.

"Our prisons are man-made 'hells on earth', places of torture and suffering. What do you think of an animal in a cage with all of its instincts to be out there free to move, longing to live its life, as was meant by the Creator? Now it finds itself in manacles, unable to move or enjoy the freedom god gave it. I thought that I was one of them during those months - cut off from friends, parents, everything that was meant to help me be a human being was taken away. I was a kind of a robot. Someone decided when I could come out, or go in, when and what I was to eat. Everything was controlled. I lived at the hand of someone else. I learned what it was to be resigned."

She was originally detained under the Emergency Regulations, along with another Sister from her convent, who was in ill health when she was detained and died subsequent to her release. The death of her 'sister' was very difficult for Bernard, especially since she only heard about it some months later. She was entirely separated from her community of nuns. "No one even told me that my sister had died, and when I found out there was nothing I could do except pray; and I had no one to talk to. I still can't believe that it is true because I haven't been allowed to go back and see her grave.

Sister Bernard's own health was jeopardised in detention. Due to a medical condition, she requires a special diet and certain medical supplies. She had to fight for several months to have her dietary and medical needs met; "The doctor in prison did what he could, but it was very difficult to get what I needed."

Sister Bernard spent 23 hours a day in complete isolation from the rest of her fellow detainees and the rest of the world. Upon her incarceration she was told that she had "lost all her civil rights now". "Without any civil rights", queried Sister Bernard. "how are you still a human being, what kind of an object is a person? I didn't know what that entailed at the beginning. Gradually I came to understand it was a period in which you have nothing to do with the world and your friends. You are just kept there in that cage. Time and space seem non-existent because you just live from day to day. You need a strong spirit in you to build you up in these periods because you have nothing else."

With no one to speak to, nothing to read except her Bible, and no contact with the outside world. Sister Ncube's faith and commitment to her community only deepened in detention. "I have a deeper strenght than ever and a deeper commitment."

"The Bible meant a lot to me, it was an answer to my situation in a very



Sister Bernard: 'Mother of Kagiso'

realistic way. The Bible spoke for itself in detention; I had never had so much time to study it. The Bible is the foundation of 'politics', it addresses itself to the structural sins of society. The sins of society are a major rebellion against God and the fundamental causes of war and bloodshed. Our society does not address itself to this rebellion against humanity."

Ncube was more concerned with the plight of her women co-detainees than her own situation. "Detention was an emotionally wrecking trauma for women in detention. They were separated from their families and that is the worst trauma that a woman can face.

A woman is living a normal life with her family and then she is grabbed out of the family and thrown into a position where she cannot even see her 3 year old child. It is really an effort for these women to cope, to be always thinking and worrying about her family, especially those women who are the only breadwinners for their families. At least I did not have to cope with the pain of always wondering how my children were; but I come from a large family of 11 and my parents are elderly and I had to worry about how they were and what was happening to them and to all my nieces and nephews."

Now released on bail, she is still separated from her community and the convent that is her home. She is restricted to certain districts; is forbidden from entering Kagiso and visiting her convent; she cannot attend any meetings and she must report twice a week to a police station.

Profile of a detainee

IVY GCINA

Ivy Cikiswa Gcina, 50, Port Elizabeth Women's Organisation president, was detained on June 12 1986 - hours before the State of Emergency was declared - and is still being held under the Emergency regulations.

Gcina, who has worked for many years as a school cleaner, first became involved during the ANC campaigns of the 1950's. When community organisation was revived in Port Elizabeth in the late 70's Gcina joined the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (Pebco). In 1983 she played a central role in the revival of women's organisations in the Eastern Cape and the following year was elected president of PE Women's Organisation..

She has also served on the Eastern Cape UDF general council.

In July 1985, when the first Emergency was declared, Gcina was detained and held without trial for over four months. In an affidavit presented to court during the Wendy Orr application, she said that on July 30, 1985, she was severely assaulted by police at Port Elizabeth's Louis le Grange Square. She also said police deliberately sprayed teargas in her face while she was in detention and threatened to shoot her children unless she co-operated with them.

Gcina, who has four children, has been the victim of several suspected "right wing" attacks over the last three years.

She was detained at her home at midnight on June 12. Her case has been taken up by Amnesty International who have conducted a letter-writing campaign to the State President on her behalf.



Detention of women

— the statistics

There are four main types of detention in South Africa. People are incarcerated under security legislation, detained under state of emergency regulations, because they have been charged and are awaiting trial or on trial without being released on bail, or because they have been convicted.

All statistics must be considered to be only estimates. Information is very difficult to obtain from the police and the prison service. Facts vary from each area of the country and depend on each state of emergency and the degree of its enforcement. The following statistics have been derived from the DPSC files of names of people who have been held under emergency regulations or other legislation. The list is by no means comprehensive, but will provide a basis for extrapolation that indicates the magnitude of detentions.

Detention of women under the State of Emergency 1986/1987

These statistics are derived from the DPSC files of names of those people who are known to have been held under the Emergency. In many cases, the gender of a detainee is not known and could not be deduced by the name given. Those detainees were assumed to be male for the purpose of the DPSC statistics. The figure of 12,2% of detainees who are known to be women is used, but the real proportion is likely to be considerably higher. If we use this percentage and a conservative estimate of 25 000 people detained between June 1986 and June 1987, the total number of women detained could be estimated to be at least 3050. It seems that this figure of 12% has been consistent throughout the State of Emergency.

While no official figures have been given, this percentage does tally with the figure of 12,5% of female children held that the police revealed in April 1987. According to the police, 12,5% of the children held on the 15th of April 1987 were female. The total number was 1 424 children aged from 12 to 18 years. It is known that 107 women were re-detained in June 1987 while they were already in detention; but again, the actual number of all the people detained are not known.

The following statistics analyse emergency detentions according to age, target group, organisation and affiliation, and area. They were compiled to represent detentions in June 1987.

Detention of women under security legislation

Despite the existence of the State of Emergency, detentions under "normal" security legislation have increased.

When the police release a figure of the numbers of people detained under security laws, they often do not release the names of those held. Therefore, it is not possible to know how many women are detained under this legislation. It is also not possible to reconcile the overall number of detentions known to the DPSC with the official information released. All DPSC estimates must be considered to be conservative. The following data will give an overall impression of the use of security legislation in the detention of women. The recent levels of security detainees are the highest for many years and can be seen to be a reflection of the degree of resistance and repression that have characterised the past three years.

- Section 28 of the Internal Security Act

This section provides for indefinite "preventative" detention and is primarily used to remove political opponents from the community for lengthy periods. However, since 1984, when 28 people were known to be detained under this section, its use has largely fallen away due to successful court challenges and heavy

criticism. Only 8 people were held under this section in 1985, none in 1986 and none in the first half of 1987.

- Section 29 of The Internal Security Act

More than half of the detentions under security legislation have occurred under this section. Section 29 allows for the indefinite detention of a person in solitary confinement with no access to legal counsel, family visits, contact with other detainees; indeed, no access to any of the other hard won "rights" permitted to detainees.

According to the legislation this section is supposed to be used to hold people in detention for the purposes of interrogation, but at least two recent court decisions have released Section 29 detainees based on the fact that they had never been questioned. It is under this section, where detainees are held for long periods completely incommunicado, that many allegations of torture and abuse are found. Under this section, detainees are the most vulnerable, physically and mentally. Many strong women have survived under this section without being broken. While the emergency regulations have at times lessened the use of Section 29, there is an annual increase in these detentions. Often detainees initially detained under the Emergency have been transferred to Section 29. They are held for long periods of time and then charged with some offence or subpoenaed to give evidence in trials.

Many Section 29 detainees have now been held for more than one year in solitary confinement.

Women have, on average, made up 8% of known persons detained under Section 29.

1984

In 1984, 7% of those 280 people known to have been detained under this section were women. One of these women was Theresa Ramashamola, now awaiting execution as one of the Sharpeville Six. Many of these women were in detention for months. Marilia Nhlabantzi gave birth in prison under Section 29. For Bessie Fihla from Soweto, branch treasurer of the since banned COSAS, it was the first of many detentions.

1985

In 1985, 11% of the known 320 people held under Section 29 were women. The Minister of Law and Order published a figure of 406, leaving a gap of 86 people absent whom nothing was known. During the crackdown on UDF leadership, many were detained under this section rather than the emergency.

A number of these were women, including Albertina Sisulu, Amanda Kwadi, Nosiswe Madlala, Ntombazana Botha, Lucile Meyer and Miranda Qwanyashe. The ECC chairperson from the Eastern Cape, Janet Cherry, was held under Section 29. She was then held under the 1986/1987 State of Emergency for almost one year. The two youngest held were Kwa Thema school girls, Joan Nontanda Gqueba, aged 14 and Monica Thabethe, aged 16, held in solitary confinement for 77 days before being released without charge.

1986

The DPSC knew of 333 detentions under Section 29 in 1986, 28 (8,5%) of whom were women. After the new State of Emergency was declared, the rate of section 29 detentions actually rose in spite of the thousands of people being detained under the Emergency. Many of the most dedicated women were held under the Emergency, transferred to Section 29, remaining in solitary confinement for over one year. Sister Bernard Ncube of Kagiso was held for more than one year before being released on bail after being charged in 1987 with subversion and sedition. She is now awaiting trial. Phinda Molefe, from Alexandra, was detained for several months and released without charge. She is the mother of a small child



Veteran activist Dorothy Nyembe: Detained under Section 29 in 1987

and her husband is the UDF General Secretary, Popo Molefe, who is one of the three Delmas treason trialists who has not been released on bail.

At least two of the women held under Section 29 in 1986 were charged, tried and subsequently sentenced. Marion Sparg was sentenced to 25 years for treason and arson. In sentencing the judge found that the fact that she was white was an aggravating factor, and sentenced her more heavily because of that. Greta Applegren was sentenced in 1987 to 21 months.

1987

The numbers of people held under section 29 in 1987 is 394. Of these, 69 (17,5%) were women - the highest percentage of women yet recorded. Those held the longest were Sister Bernard Ncube, Nomvula Mokonyane, Johanna Makoao, Maria Letshaba, all from Kagiso, who spent most of 1987 under Section 29 detention. Johanna Makoao is the only other woman co-accused in Sister Bernard's trial. Dorothy Nyembe, in her '60s, was released in 1984 after spending 10 years on Robben Island, and was detained in 1987 under Section 29 in Durban.

- Section 31 of the Internal Security Act

This section provides for the detention of potential state witnesses. It is a particularly pernicious section, and much mental anguish is associated with it. Because the names are always shrouded in secrecy, only a few are ever known.

Many of those who are detained under this section do not agree to give evidence for the State against their detainees, and when they are eventually brought to court they are given prison sentences for refusing to testify. For instance, in 1984, 18 people were detained under or transferred to this section.

Emma Ntimbani, a teacher, refused to testify and received a 12 month sentence. Rena Mokoena was detained in November 1984 under Section 29, transferred to Section 31, and detained up until the end of the 1986 State of Emergency. At least 6 more known women were transferred to this section.

But in 1986, for example, only 13 people were known out of the 709 detained under this section; 5 were women.

- Section 50 of the Internal Security Act

This section provides for short-term (up to 14 days) "preventative" detention. It is extremely difficult to gather information on the numbers and names of detainees held under this section. As a very rough estimate, in 1984, 72 people were known to be held under Section 50 (10 women); in 1985 the figure rose to 1924 (250 women); in 1986 at least 3512 (500 women) people were held under this section, representing 88% of all detentions under the Internal Security Act.

It is noteworthy that of the persons detained under this section, approximately 4% were charged and approximately 0.5% were convicted of any offence. The significance of the extremely high numbers detained under this section reflect its use to supplement Emergency type powers in non-Emergency areas during the 1985/86 Emergency, and in all areas during the 3 month period between the two formal States of Emergency. For example, many of the hundreds of people detained in Kagiso were held under this section, as the Emergency had not been declared in that area in the 1985/1986 term.

However, this section has not been used since 12 June 1986 because the Emergency Regulations give the authorities the same powers of "preventative" detention.

Repression in the bantustans

Information about actual detentions in the bantustans is very difficult to obtain. The numbers of detentions in the bantustans are many but it is not easy to ascertain the numbers of women.

Few women are known to have been detained under security legislation in these areas, although the Transkei recorded the most detentions under the security legislation per region. Many detentions have also occurred under the Ciskei National Security Act. A human rights group in the Transkei released a report at the end of 1987 detailing extraordinarily high levels of repression, with equally high levels of resistance. Many of those detained are still in detention, including several members of parliament in the recent political upheavals. Women are most affected in these areas by the attacks on the community as a whole. The arbitrary nature of the detentions is clear. One woman was apparently detained because police were unable to find her husband. Many women have been charged with various offences such as terrorism, harbouring "terrorists" or the possession of banned publications. A total of 783 people were charged in 41 political trials.

Legal actions against the minister of police and political trials most heavily underline the repression in Transkei. There were 27 court applications seeking relief from detention, assaults in detention or banishment and deportation orders. In one case, detainee Nomonde Matiso is claiming for unlawful detention and assault. Matiso, a church worker, was apparently so badly tortured in detention that she spent 3 months in hospital, where she was again allegedly assaulted.

Restriction orders/bannings/deportations

There is an increasing use of regulation 7 (1) of the emergency regulations which provides for the restriction from political activities or confinement to specified areas when detainees are released. Of the restriction orders served on people who were released in the 1986/87 period, 30 (47%) were women, most of whom were white.

It is used instead of detention for curtailing political involvement. For example, Janet Cherry, Sue Lund, and Claire Verbeek were released with restriction orders forbidding them from taking part in activities or organisations. Penelope Mosele and Dorcas Dikana, who gave birth in detention, were released with their infants and restriction orders.

Deportations have been most commonly used in the bantustan areas. However, one woman, Anika van Gylswyrk, of the Black Sash, a Swedish passport holder, was deported after being released from detention. Chris Bonner, a regional secretary of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union, was detained for 2 weeks at the beginning of the State of Emergency, and is still appealing against a deportation order.

Banning and banishment orders are used more extensively by the bantustan regimes. For example, in the Transkei, people seen as opponents of the government are restricted to certain areas, banished to remote areas, or deported from the bantustan back to South Africa or elsewhere.



Women in political trials 1985 - 1987

The difficulty of recording political trials in South Africa is that only the most spectacular ever end up in newspaper reports. We therefore have only been able to record those trials which have come to our attention because the accused were well-known figures, or the nature of the charges were such that the press deemed them to be newsworthy. This means that literally thousands of trials have taken place in the last few years which have passed unremarked. It also means that hundreds of women who have appeared in those trials have met a fate known only to their close family and the courts in which they appeared. DPSC records show that the vast majority of the cases referred to here were for offences such as public violence.

The Minister of Law and Order, answering questions in Parliament in 1986, revealed that during the state of emergency from July 1985 to March 1986 (which covered initially 36 Magisterial districts, and later 45, but not the whole of South Africa), about 22 000 prosecutions were launched on charges of public violence. Only a handful of these were known to monitoring groups. Lawyers handling such cases report, however, that where such cases were known, and the accused were represented by counsel, the result was that in the vast majority of cases, the charges were dropped, and of those which went through the legal process, the majority were acquitted.

The year 1985 did, however, mark a high point of women's struggles and demonstrations, which resulted in the prosecution of many women. The state makes extensive use of the courts in order to 'criminalise' their opposition, giving themselves a 'cleaner' image in terms of the number of people detained, and in answer to the call made by many well-meaning but misguided groups for the state to charge or release detainees. It is the position of the DPSC that the government has armed itself with such an array of repressive legislation which outlaws activities which in most democratic countries would be regarded as legitimate opposition, that to call for people to be charged is to lend credibility to an unjust system, and which may have the outcome of sending innocent people to jail.

Women were prominent in demonstrations in Western Cape in 1985. There is a long history of women's militancy in the squatter camps of this area, as women struggled to unite their families, divided by the iniquities of the system of influx control. In 1985, 169 women from the New Crossroads squatter camp took part in a demonstration around squatter conditions and were arrested and charged with the offence of illegal gathering. 89 of these were found guilty and received suspended sentences.

In the same year, 22 women, mainly white, took the courageous step of entering the black township of Soweto without the permission of the authorities, and taking up position outside Moroka Police Station, where a number of schoolchildren were held, who had been detained for taking part in a campaign against inferior education. The 22 were arrested and brought to court, where they were cautioned and discharged.

Another demonstration resulting in charges was mounted by the South African Society of Journalists in Cape Town. The issue was the freedom of the press, and the demonstration took the form of people taking turns to stand alone, holding a placard. Ms. Pippa Green, who was a journalist on the Cape Times, was not the first of the demonstrators, but the police singled her out, arrested her, and charged her with illegal demonstration. She was subsequently acquitted in court.

By far the most high profile trial in 1985 was the treason trial in Pietermaritzburg of the "UDF 16". In this trial, the most prominent leaders of the UDF were arraigned in an alleged conspiracy to further the aims of the ANC



Albertina Sisulu: On trial for treason in 1985

through the structures of the UDF. The trial was very lengthy, with four of the accused being acquitted at the end of the state's argument, and the other 12 being released in December 1985.

Among the 16 was Albertina Sisulu, one of the three joint presidents of the UDF. She is a stalwart of the women's movement, being a leader of the Federation of South African Women in the 1950's, and more recently of the Federation of Transvaal Women, and the recently re-launched Fedasaw. Albertina was in a trial the previous year, and has borne the burden of her husband, an ANC leader, being in life imprisonment, her eldest son, Zwelakhe in detention and a grandson jailed for terrorism.

The Eastern Cape has long been the heartland of people's struggle, and has

produced some of the most remarkable leaders and individuals. Amongst these were the outstanding civil rights campaigner, Molly Blackburn. She and her erstwhile colleague, Di Bishop, were harassed too many times to mention, not least through the courts.

One of the most memorable of these was when Ms. Blackburn, acting on information from a distraught parent about the abuse of arrested schoolchildren at Uitenhage police station, led a group of Black Sash women into the station, and there witnessed the brutal assaults of a young detainee. In the ensuing confusion Molly Blackburn and Dr. Liz Thomson accused the officer in charge of the station of being inebriated, and were charged with *crimen injuria*. They were acquitted.

Not long afterwards, Molly Blackburn was killed in a car crash. Blackburn, her sister Judy Chalmers, and the Bishops were returning from Oudtshoorn where the information about repression in the township of Bhongolethu are recorded in "The Last Affidavits."

The end of 1985 saw the sentencing of Theresa Ramashamola and five others to death, charged with murder and subversion. The charges arose out of the events of 3 September, 1984 in the Vaal, when a massive popular protest against a rent increase took place in the various townships in the area, such as Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Boipatong, and Zamdela. On that day, a large crowd, marching on the community council offices, was passing the house of a councillor, and called on him to join the march. His response was to open fire on the crowd, whereupon the crowd attacked him, and he was killed.

Ms. Ramashamola was among the crowd, and was found to have urged people to kill the councillor. The Sharpeville Six, as they are known, are on death row.

The year 1986 opened with a focus on another very prominent political figure - Winnie Mandela. For many years, she had been banished to the small Orange Free State town of Brandfort. There she had built a clinic, and had engaged in community work. She was subjected to enormous harassment, culminating in the petrol-bombing of her house. After this, she decided to defy her banning order, and moved back to the family home in Soweto. She was immediately charged with breaking her restrictions. Under immense pressure, both local and international, the state backed down, and withdrew the charges.

Two of the most dramatic political trials of 1986 were those of Helene Passtoors and Marion Sparg. The former is a Dutch citizen, who was nevertheless charged with treason against the South African state. Her offences included the caching of arms for ANC guerillas, furthering the aims of that organisation, and treason. She was found guilty, and sentenced to 10 years. She suffered a particularly traumatic detention and interrogation being held in solitary confinement in John Vorster Square, under constant closed circuit television surveillance. Passtoors has now been subpoenaed to give evidence in an ANC treason trial against her friend Ismail Ebrahim. Refusal to testify could result in more years being added to her prison sentence.

Marion Sparg, a South African who had worked as a journalist in the Eastern Cape before leaving the country and joining the ANC, was involved in a number of attacks on police stations before being caught. Her activities began in her home town of East London, where a limpet mine exploded in Cambridge police station. Not long afterwards, a blast destroyed part of John Vorster Square in Johannesburg, and an unexploded device was found at Hillbrow Police Station. Shortly after this, Marion was arrested, and put on trial, after which she received a sentence of 25 years.

The charge of possession of banned literature is commonly used against activists when all other ways of harassment have failed. Given the sweeping powers of the State to ban publications, it is not impossible that one would find such documents in the possession of many South African citizens. Thus it is not surprising to find that the important women's activist from Cape Town, Shaida Issel, was charged for this offence, though charges were withdrawn. Also in 1986,

Shirley Gunn and Arletta Ngobese were both charged with similar offences, but in their trials, were found not guilty.

Perhaps the offence which the state finds most opprobrious is that of furthering the aims of the ANC. People who are obvious sympathisers of that organisation set a very dangerous example to other politically aware individuals in the community, and are therefore mercilessly treated, in order to discourage sympathisers. In June 1986, Elizabeth Erasmus and Fuad Kallie were charged with making an ANC flag which was flown at an ANC funeral. They were acquitted in early 1987. Nontembiso Ndabeni of Port Elizabeth, along with five others was charged in 1986 with furthering the aims of the ANC, as was Brendaline Marks and Vernon Roussouw, of the Cape. Neither case has come to a conclusion yet.

The wave of popular protest which marked the current period of South African resistance history has kept up its momentum, though perhaps in 1987, it took on a lower-keyed form of expression. However, the high visibility of many of the protests was manifested in the attempts by the police to crush such demonstrations of the public will. A number of trials were launched, dealing with such subjects as arson, public violence, attempted murder, terrorism and subversion.

Many of these arose out of the Vaal resistance to high rents, and although many were only recently brought on trial, they have been in detention for very long periods - some well over a year. During 1986, three women were in a group of 13 who were charged as above. They were found not guilty of the terrorism, but were convicted of public violence and given suspended sentences.

Also in the Vaal area, Maria Sobekwe and others were arraigned on charges of subversion and murder, but were acquitted. Subversion as a charge is often used to attack those who undermine the legitimacy of authorities such as councillors.

In March 1987, 11 people were brought to court, charged with murder, though in circumstances which clearly indicate a political motivation. Regrettably, the DPSC knows little about this case, but there are three women and two minors involved. The case is still in progress. Another politically-related trial involving an apparent common law offence is that of Ms. Phyllis Fante, who on April 1987 was found guilty of attempted murder.

A case involving direct ANC links arose in Durban 1986/7. The protagonists were Robert McBride and Greta Appelgren. The former was alleged to be a trained guerilla, who enlisted the help of Ms. Appelgren on a self-chosen mission which he saw as a retaliatory action for a raid into a neighbouring state by SA forces, in which ANC members had been killed. His action took the form of a car bomb, involving loss of life. He has been sentenced to death, while Greta Appelgren received a sentence of 21 months, as she was found not to have been aware of McBride's intentions.

Many of the detainees held for long periods under Emergency Regulations or security legislation have only recently been charged with offences and are in the process of being brought to trial. The plethora of trials throughout the country that have recently resulted in convictions or are now in process are clogging the courts, depleting the limited resources of support organisations, and severely stretching the legal counsel available for trials that by their very nature are political. People have been convicted of and are on trial for : Treason; terrorism; subversion; sedition; sabotage; possession of banned literature; murder; arson; assault; furthering the aims of banned organisations; public violence; membership in the ANC; intimidation; attending an illegal gathering; contravention of the Police Act; harbouring suspected terrorists; malicious damage to property; kidnapping; publishing subversive statements; refusing to testify; possession of weapons; contravention of emergency regulations; public disturbances; illegal displaying of placards; illegal picketing; incitement; leaving the country illegally; contravention of the Internal Security Act; illegal possession of grenades; distribution of illegal pamphlets; photographing an illegal gathering; receiving military training; illegal strikes; possession of banned T- shirts...



Save the 32 South African patriots

Make your mark against the murder of our patriots

The evil and racist government which rules our country by force also uses its administrative machinery to create conditions for oppression exploitation. Their courts have condemned 32 South African patriots to death for their opposition to apartheid colonialism. These brave men and women of our country come from our youth, women and community organisations.

Together with all of us they have been fighting against the criminal apartheid system for a non-racial democratic society based on the Freedom Charter. On the other hand the South African government is destabilising the Frontline States. Their vigilante bandits, SADF, SAP and Kitskonstabels are killing our people every day. They have killed innumerable patriots in detention.

They have already executed our brave fighters like Vuyisile Mini, Motaung, Moloise, Payi, Zondo and others. Today they are about to hang 32 patriots, including McBride. Their lives can only be saved by united action by all peace-loving and freedom-loving people the world over.

Sayco demands:

- An end to the hanging of political prisoners and activists.
- For political, humanitarian and moral reasons, the apartheid regime must not hang the 32 South African patriots presently on "Death Row".
- The apartheid regime must become a signatory to the Geneva Convention.
- All those captured activists who had taken up arms against the apartheid regime must be given prisoner-of-war status.

P Mokaba
SAYCO PRESIDENT

SAHA

Women on Death Row: Theresa Ramashamola

Theresa Ramashamola (26) is the first South African woman to be sentenced to death for political violence. She was convicted along with five young men in December 1985 for the elimination of the deputy mayor of Sharpeville in the Vaal uprising of September 1984.

Ramashamola, a single woman who was working in the kitchen of a roadhouse before her detention, was taken into custody in November 1984. She spent several months in solitary confinement under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act before being charged.

Lawyers say that evidence was submitted to court that Ramashamola was tortured during her period of solitary confinement. Among other things the court was told of electric shocks were applied to her nipples.

She never gave a confession during interrogation, her lawyer says. The court rejected defence submissions that there was a pattern of police torture of the accused.

The judge accepted a confession made by one of Ramashamola's co-accused. This and in-camera evidence of witnesses largely formed the basis of the conviction and consequent death sentence.



A mother mourns: Sylvia Jele, mother of Sicelo Dhlomo

The women speak: A mother's cry

Sicelo Dhlomo was the only natural child of Sylvia Jele. Sicelo, an 18 year old volunteer worker at the DPSC, was brutally murdered by unknown assailants in January of this year. The victim of such a brutal death, Sicelo's name is added to the growing list of opponents of the apartheid system who have died under such unsolved circumstances: Goniwe, Mxenge, Calata, Ribiero and many others.

Sicelo had been detained for 5 months under the 1986 State of Emergency, and told the world in an interview in the CBS television documentary "Children of Apartheid" that he had been assaulted and tortured during his detention. He had been acquitted on a charge of murder following his detention. Less than a week before he had been shot in the head in a field near his mother's house, he had been taken from the DPSC office and detained for several hours and questioned about his interview with CBS.

Sylvia gave evidence before a tribunal hearing on the effects of detention on children in Washington last year. She spoke about what it is to live as the mother of a young activist and to live with her child in detention and in constant danger.

As a mother, she became convinced, through the experiences of her son, that she must also be in a position to say and do something to liberate her community. She was not in a position to join any organisation at the time, due to the constant

police harassment of her son but she was very eager to join women's organisations like Fedtraw . She has now joined the DPSC, and when asked why replied "Because of the harassment of my child, I must be part and parcel of the struggle."

Sicelo once said he became involved in the "struggle for freedom" because "I am fighting not only for my rights, but for the rights of others, for my parents who are not respected as people, I am going to fight for my people, my rights and for a democratic South Africa. I may have to die to achieve this."

These prophetic words of this young activist came true: and a concerned and loving mother is now a grieving and angry mother, mourning her terrible loss. As one of the speaker's at Sicelo's memorial service stated: "The spear of our young and brave comrade has now fallen, who will pick up the spear? It is a challenge to all of us."

Sylvia must now live with the agony of having lost her bright and committed son in such a brutal and vicious way. Sylvia's loss and her courage to continue to speak out and to work in the struggle is a painful tribute to the mothers of South Africa.

A silenced voice

DEBORAH JOSEPHINE MARAKALLA

Deborah is 23 years old, and has no children. She will probably never have children again.

She was in detention under the state of emergency regulations, having been detained at the Tembisa Black Sash Advice Office where she worked on July 7, 1986.

Deborah, a member of the Tembisa Detainees' Support Committee, was pregnant at the time of her detention. Less than a fortnight later, she suffered a miscarriage and had to be taken to hospital. She told her lawyer what happened.

"I was at Johannesburg General Hospital from July 24 to 31. I was plus minus three months pregnant, but I lost the baby because it was inside my fallopian tube and the tube burst." "I underwent an operation and the other fallopian tube was cut out - meaning I'm left with one fallopian tube."

Deborah's friends and family say doctors have told her she will be unable to have children again - and that she is lucky to be alive.

"She nearly died during the miscarriage," one said. "She was alone in her cell, and cried out for help. No one heard her, it seems, so no one could help her." She was only helped when it was too late, they say - when the baby was already dead.

The hardship for Deborah's children goes back several weeks before her detention; she had not slept at home for some weeks, as she had heard the police were looking for her. "They didn't like what she was doing at the advice office," a family member said. They don't like anyone who speaks for themselves. They think locking them up will keep them quiet."

Deborah's family say this is one of the things they have learnt from her detention. Another thing they have learnt is that it is important for family and friends to support people in detention, by visiting them and sending letters.

"It makes them feel strong if they can have contact," one family member said. "They need our support - and we must give it to them." This is particularly important for Deborah, the family says, as they didn't know how long she would stay in detention.

She signed a sworn statement saying she was merely doing office work in Tembisa. In her statement, she also said she had undergone surgery while in detention, and that her health is suffering as she has asthma and gets palpitations and tension headaches.

A letter from Pollsmoor Prison

Many young people are presently incarcerated in South African prisons having been convicted on the charge of public violence. Two 19 year old women were sentenced to Pollsmoor Prison with the "Wynberg Seven" in Cape Town. Venetia de Klerk writes from prison:

Sitting here in the sewing room beside the window, the direct sunshine slowly warms up my whole body for I began feeling cold all over when I started sewing seams and replacing lost buttons. Every stitch I sew reminds me of home! Thoughts of my parents, my sisters Lydia and Jenny, also my brothers Dereck and Eddie, and of course my nephew Kurt who lives with us. Eddie will be celebrating his sixteenth birthday on September ninth. I wish I could be there with them all!

I can still remember my sixteenth birthday. Daddy was so proud of me - his "little baby girl" he used to call me. Now, three years later, I find myself here in Pollsmoor Prison.

Because I studied needle work as a subject at high school up to standard ten, the wardress gave me the job of seamstress. It is quite a job with all the work to be done. As I sit here my mind flows back to the past. Now and then the tears well in my eyes.

I am thinking now of that beautiful green frock mummy made for me when I was five years old. It had lots of frills and ribbons. Everyone in the hall said I looked like a doll! That night I won first prize in the Junior Ballroom competition. I wonder what has happened to that little partner who danced so light-footed with me? I suppose he won't believe it if he could see what has happened to me now.

Then I ran in the Western Province school sports annual races. How proud it made me feel when I wore that first-prize blue badge! Until recently I used to work at weekends for a supermarket to earn my own pocket money to buy some sewing material for the beautiful skirts I would make for myself. My girlfriends were a little bit envious because of all those beautiful skirts. I can also remember doing the weekly shopping and helped mummy with her housework. She always bought me a slab of chocolate then because she knew I couldn't resist it.

Evenings at home: Daddy and Dereck always came home at five o' clock. They worked very hard as my father owns a busy building contractor's business. Every night after they had showered we would all sit around the table enjoying the evening meal. Afterwards we would all get set for a game of snooker in the front room which daddy had set aside for our recreation, just for his family to relax and to be together. I won most games and it often ended with Eddie calling me a cheat!

Sometimes I feel that I just want to scream at someone as I sit here and think back on the normal life I had led until now. I know that I've done nothing wrong. What am I doing in this place? I just want to go home but I know my cries will fall on deaf ears. The first two months have passed quickly. We were trying to adjust to this foreign environment and now we are falling into the prison pattern as all other prisoners have to.

How did all this come about? I clearly remember that day two years ago on the 15th of October, 1985. At that time there was unrest in all our schools. Everyone was caught up in the situation. That particular



'I know the people out there are with us...'

afternoon I decided to go with some of my schoolfriends to Wynberg. I felt a little worried as daddy's rules were that none of us were to go about after school. We had to come straight home! But I was sure he would make an exception this time.

As we arrived in Matts Road there were police roaming around in their casspirs. We ignored them and went to a schoolfriend who was living nearby.

Then there was this loud knocking on the door and in came a policeman. He marched us all out into the street and before we could say anything or argue about our innocence we found ourselves loaded into a police van and driven to the Wynberg Police Station. I could feel my heart thumping in my chest!

We arrived there in an angry and shocked state. After a while I heard that our parents had arrived at the police station and had expressed their anger and concern for their children. My parents had arrived and were very worried. The next day we were released in our parents care. I remember running to daddy and cried while telling him that I had done nothing wrong. I know that my parents believed me. But we had been forced to stay overnight in the Wynberg Court cells!

From then on the nightmare began. The case dragged on for two years and everyone was shocked when they heard that we were to start a one-year prison sentence at Pollsmoor Prison starting from the eight of June 1987.

Soon the wardress will come and collect my completed work!

She never looks directly at me and speaks very little, almost as if I am not here. I look forward to the afternoon because at four thirty I can go back to my cell and study. I've received a B-plus for my biology assignment. I find it easier to study as it keeps my mind occupied from this soul-destroying place.

I know the people out there are with us. I saw it at the last public meeting which was held on Sunday the seventh June 1987. That was the day before we had to report to Pollsmoor Prison. The meeting was

arranged by the Wynberg Crises Centre. It was at that meeting that my daddy told a huge audience that he would stand by us and give us all his support.

After his speech I felt like throwing my arms around him for I never knew that he would have had the courage. As it was Sunday we left immediately after the meeting to go to a church service at the Heathfield Methodist Church which was conducted by Reverend Simons. In the sanctuary of the Church it made me feel good and I held mummy's hand as we walked towards the pew.

We, as a family, knelt before the altar for our communion before the other members of the congregation. The Rev. Simons told the congregation about my plight in that I was the teenage girl of the "Wynberg Seven" that must go to prison the next day. After a long silence they prayed for me and many began to weep. I saw a man right in front of me wipe his eyes openly. As we left the service the people held or shook my hand saying : "God will go with you tomorrow, my girl."

When we arrived at home we moved around the house speaking very little. I remember going to my room and packing and unpacking my case. Mummy came into my room and just looking at me broke down and cried her heart out. Later when it became apparent that no one was going to sleep that night, Daddy sent for the family doctor who gave us sedatives to make us sleep.

The day of my leaving dawned all too soon. I bathed and did my hair just like someone going to a party. My little nephew, Kurt, sat outside in the car and I could see that he did not really understand what was really happening.

The Monday morning we gathered at the home of Mr and Mrs Enous in Wynberg before leaving for Pollsmoor. After prayers and speeches we left and all the way to Pollsmoor, as daddy drove, I sat at the back of the car with my brother Eddie. He held me tightly in his arms while I just cried softly all the way. He tried to pacify me, saying : "Don't cry Nercia, don't cry. You have to be strong. Everything is going to be alright."

We arrived at Pollsmoor prison at noon. A large crowd of people had come to show their solidarity with the "Wynberg Seven". Everywhere people stood crying because they had become part of these tragic circumstances.

A police helicopter whined uncaringly above them describing constricting circular patterns like a noose. Police guarded the entrance to the prison with leashed vicious dogs.

The crowd softly sang freedom songs and after my family said goodbye, I cried when the huge gates shut me in. Mummy whispered that she would be bringing me a large chocolate slab on her very first visit.

This week my parents have had their thirty-minute visit.

They have had to choose who would see me as only one visitor per visit is allowed. Daddy always let mummy come to see me while he waits outside. I know that he cannot bear to see me like this!

Soon the Christmas visit will be coming up. I know it will be a sad day for all our family. On her last visit mummy expressed concern at my apparent loss of weight and said to me : "I've brought you two slabs of chocolate but they refused to take it. Now I must take it back home again." "Give it to Kurt. I don't know what chocolate tastes like anymore," I told her.

We stared into each other's eyes as the thirty minute visit was over leaving so much unsaid.

Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokotho

(You have struck the women, you have struck the rock)

This famous song of the courage and resistance of South African women was first sung on August 9, 1956. The leaders of Fedsaw were banned, exiled, imprisoned and charged; effectively silencing the organisation.

Three decades later, women's organisations have taken a new form and have survived despite the detention of the officials and members and constant state harassment. Women have organised in the community to resist unjust rents, rising living costs, transport issues, removals, unemployment, the Koornhof Bills, police and army in the townships, unfair work conditions, and the detention of children. In fact, it is often the women in the community who must organise resistance, as they are the most affected during the prolonged absences of men.

We are now entering the third year of living under a State of Emergency. Despite the detentions and repression, women are continuing to struggle and to fight back. The detentions of women and their families have shown that women have the strength to survive, to resist, and to organise. The continuing repression has politicised women as never before.

The detention of women throughout this period of state onslaught is an indication of their participation and effectiveness in mobilising resistance. But despite the achievements of women in the community, women have to fight two struggles. Women have organised in the workplace and have been at the forefront of many militant strikes. But unions have been slow to develop women's programmes and take up issues of importance to women at the bargaining table.

Women's issues, as always, lag behind because women's full participation is prevented by responsibilities at home, traditional husbands, and the double shift of work that women must do, and which is "never done". Women's activities in the community are curtailed due to restricted time and access. While women have been mobilised in large numbers in the community, it has been against almost insurmountable odds that women's organisations set up to address the problems of women as women have survived. A rare example of such mobilisation was the women's stayaway organised in Port Alfred in response to rape in their township.

In the 1980's, women's organisations all over the country began uniting in regions. The membership democratically determined the objectives based on regional conditions and issues. Women were adamant that women's issues be seen as integral to the political issues in the country. The launch of the UDF Women's Congress and the revival of FEDSAW both occurred during 1987. These major national federations are committed to the basic principles of non-racialism, non-sexism, and democracy and to the development of women's participation in grassroots organisations.

Despite the debilitating effects of the State of Emergency combined with vigilante actions, which severely limited consolidation and strategy, the very fact that two such major events took place attests to the spirit of women.
