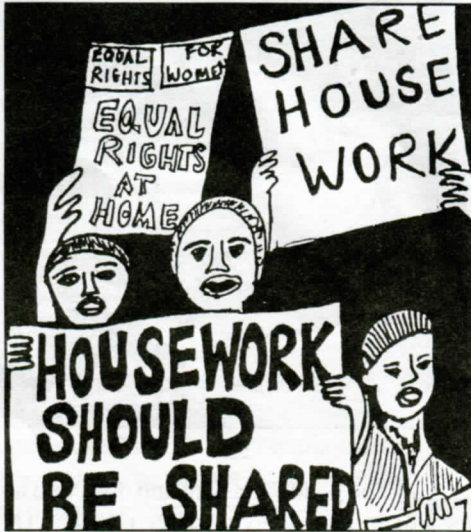


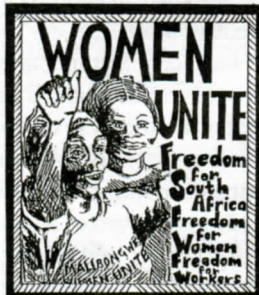
Shared Housework

The issue of shared housework is being taken up by women in Africa. Two related articles "Sharing the Load," about a book which gives a vision of the new South Africa, and "A Man Without Broken Hands in the Home," about one man's view on housework, have been published recently in *SPEAK*.



About *SPEAK*

SPEAK



SPEAK is a non-profit South African magazine that puts women's liberation on the agenda of the South African liberation struggle. Through interviews, photographs, poetry and stories, South African women speak out about their oppression as women and about how they are fighting to change it. *SPEAK* comes out six times a year. For subscription requests (one year = US\$ 25), write to:

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Women and men workers, shop stewards and union officials from the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) speak out in this book about their struggle for gender equality, parental rights and childcare.

Struggle and victory

The book is rich in workers' experiences. Workers and union officials tell of their lives of struggle and challenge to build the union since early 1970's. They tell of the fight by workers for their rights: the right to organize as workers in trade unions, the right to decent wages and working conditions, the right for workers to be parents.

In the 1970's women workers who became pregnant were not protected. If they did not lose their jobs, they were forced to work under very difficult conditions. Women workers tell of these painful and desperate times - no job security and being forced to leave a tiny baby at home to go back to work.

The joke was on the bosses

The book tells of how the union's demand for a maternity agreement was first treated as a joke by OK Bazaars bosses. They said it was a "ridiculous demand." The workers didn't think so. After a bitter struggle, maternity agreements were signed in the early 1980's with OK Bazaars, CNA and Woolworths. This was a real breakthrough. Women workers were protected from losing their jobs when they became pregnant. They were guaranteed their jobs back when they came back from their 12 months unpaid maternity leave. But that was not enough. The union asked many questions. What use was unpaid leave? Why should women be punished for having babies? In fact, why should women be the ones to carry the load of the children and the housework?