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SPEAK Collective members are Gill, Helen,
Jacqueline, Karen, Nise, Phumelele, Shamim,
and Vanessa. We welcome Jacqueline, a new
SPEAK employee, onto the Collective.

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LETTERS



Dear SPEAK Collective

As one of your magazine readers, I wish to express my gratitude to read that domestic workers are advancing in the worker s struggle.

I wish to highlight some other points which I believe are our rights:

- * maternity leave
- * study leave
- * compassionate leave
- * time-off to take the child to the clinic for medical reasons.

The above should be on full pay.

Let's not thank De Klerk's move in releasing our leaders as a change, until our demands are met the struggle goes on. Viva SADWU!

Yours

Morgan Gomati

Meadowlands, Soweto

Dear Morgan,

We are very pleased that you raised these points about the rights of domestic workers. We hope that other domestic workers will write to us about more rights which they feel domestic workers should have. We agree with you about De Klerk. And we join with you in saying: Viva SADWU - forward with the worker's struggle for a living wage and a decent life!

Dear SPEAK

I became very interested in SPEAK number 25. Because it's true, we domestic workers are really suffering. I am a lady of 25 years and its two years now that I'm working here. She pays me R140.00 per month. I begin at 6.30 in the morning, and coming out at 6 or 7 in the evening. The other lady is coming only Monday and Friday. She pays R5.00 per day. So I need your help because we want to join the union. We don't even get bonus and leave. Please answer me and give more information. Because

there are also women who want to join but we don't know how.

Yours sincerely
Exploited Domestic Worker
Parys, Orange Free State

Dear Friend,
Thank you very much for your letter. We are very pleased that you have written to us. It is good to know that domestic workers in your area want to organise against their exploitation. We phoned the South African Domestic Workers' Union and they said that you should write to: SADWU, P.O. Box 865, Vereeniging, 1930, Phone 016 - 211013. We wish you success in fighting for your rights.

Dear SPEAK Collective
I would like to have a few comments on the question of lobola. I personally disagree with the people who hold the view that lobola would not fit in the post-apartheid era. I agree that men sometimes say, "I can do what I want to my wife. I paid for her. She belongs to me."

Lobola is a backbone of customary marriages. Maybe people are saying lobola has no room where people marry by civil rights and pay lobola. In this case I do not envisage a position in which lobola would survive.

According to custom, a woman belongs to the family. This is proved by the fact that a bridegroom is helped in paying ikhazi by a family member. When a man says he can do whatever he wants, he is perhaps wrong because in the marriage ceremony he is often advised against ill-treating his wife.

If it happens that he ill-treated her, she can go back to her home. When a man goes to fetch her he has to pay a cow or an ox. To those who say paying of lobola is a sale I have one question to ask, or it's just a comment. In a sale of an ox or a horse when it goes back to its former master, does the buyer pay before he can claim?

When a person marries another a relation exists not only between the two parties but between their families, so lobola is what brings the two families together. When a woman goes to settle among her husband's people she is given a beast which would provide for her families'

future needs. Would you call that a discount?

"Do not model yourself on the world around you, but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind." Rom 12:2
People must not be harsh when dealing with the customs because a nation without them would be said to be abnormal.
Yours
Bawo Tayi
Gomolo Location, Port St Johns

Dear Bawo,
Thank you for your letter, and for continuing the discussion on lobola. It is true that a nation needs customs. But surely we must weigh up which customs oppress women, and then make changes if we find that they are. We welcome your comments and hope more readers will write to us about lobola.

Dear SPEAK
I am one of your magazine readers. I am 20 years old. So I read the article on lobola in SPEAK. Well, according to my mental capacity I think lobola should be abolished totally. Lobola is no more like it used to be. Now it has become a famous business like anything. It must not exist in post-apartheid society.

You find parents saying they want one thousand rands or two for their daughter. Meanwhile they see how all of us we are exploited in this country. We are economically depressed in this country. Now parents again they exploit us, we men of this country. Which means if you may not afford this money you will have no wife in the future. That is why we find prostitution is so high and hobos in parks so many. It is because of this lobola.

That's why people don't marry. They just take a girl and go home with her without paying any cent. It is because he can't afford this big money parents exploit us with. That's why I say this lobola must be abolished.
Yours
Muhammad Bukari IBN Lebepe
As-Salaam Educational Institute, Natal

Dear Muhammad,
Thank you for your letter in response to the SPEAK article on lobola. We hope that more SPEAK readers will join in the debate. We look forward to publishing more letters from readers on this topic!