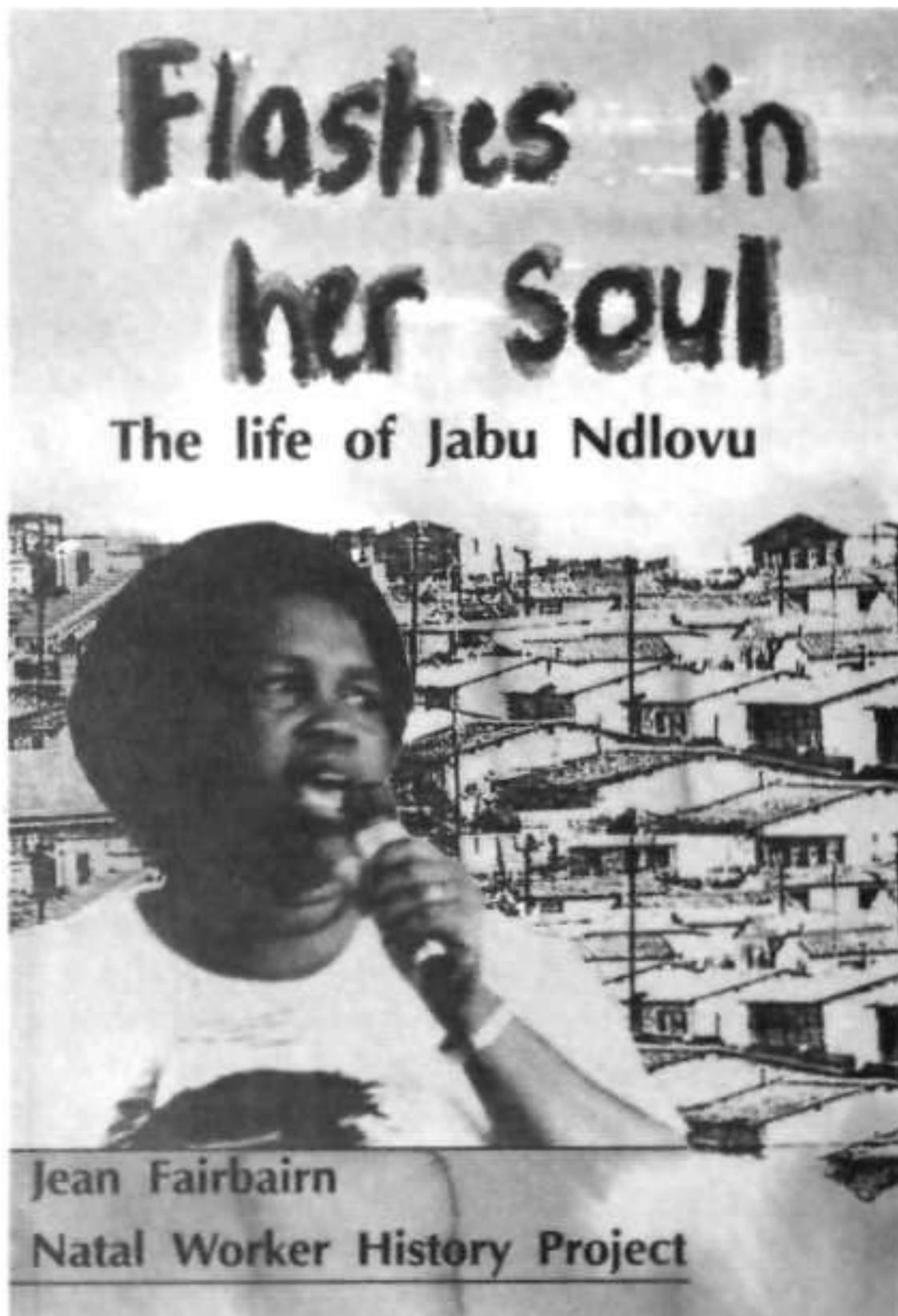


Flashes in her Soul:

The Life of Jabu Ndlovu



Flashes in her Soul is a book about the life of Jabu Ndlovu a shop steward in the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) and a leader in the community of Imbali. Jabu was assassinated in May 1989. The book was written from interviews with Jabu's friends, comrades and family.

This is both a sad and an inspiring book. It is sad because it is the story of a brave and courageous woman who died in a senseless war. It is inspiring because it offers the reader a rich and detailed story of Jabu's life - the life of a woman who achieved much in a short time.

The book begins with Jabu's life in the rural area of the Natal Midlands. Through the voices of friends, comrades and family - the people who loved and cared for Jabu - the story of Jabu's youth, adolescence and marriage to her childhood lover is told. You learn of Jabu's life and you also get a rich and colourful picture of what it was like to grow up in Nhlenbambkhosi. We are told of the hardships that people suffered and the way in which people managed to survive.

Township life and activism

Jabu moved to Imbali, a township outside Pietermaritzburg and the story shifts there. It tells of Jabu's move to township life and factory work. We are told of how the union - the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU), later to become NUMSA - came to the factory gates and how the union changed Jabu's life. Of how she changed from being a passive and accepting woman into a fighter for justice and freedom for all.

Jabu's life as an activist may have begun with the union, but it did not end there. Her involvement in the community of Imbali meant she became an

important figure there. It was not long before Jabu found herself in the middle of the war that was unfolding in and around the townships of Pietermaritzburg.

The book tells of the hardships that were experienced by Jabu and her family. It tells of how she became a victim of the violence and how her family suffered under the strain of having to live with constant threats on their lives.

The story ends with Jabu's tragic death - a death that robbed the community of Imbali of a courageous and brave woman who sought to fight for freedom and justice for all.

Well worth reading

This book is well worth reading. The story of Jabu's life is told simply and clearly. It is an important book because Jabu's story is in many ways also the story of the lives and experiences of thousands of women in South Africa who struggle and suffer as a result of the war. ☺

My message is to encourage the women to struggle, even if they are not working, to be active within the community. They must help the community, especially the youth - help them when they have got problems. The youth complain that their fathers are not helping, especially on the weekends they go off drinking. So the women must help the youth - they must call meetings and help them plan what to do. - Jabu Ndlovu

Flashes in her Soul: the life of Jabu Ndlovu' was produced by the Natal Worker History Project. The book will also be available in Zulu after June 1991. This review was written by Lacom, Johannesburg. If you would like to buy a copy of the book, send R9.60 to Natal Worker History Project, c/o Sociology Department, University of Natal, King George V Avenue, Durban, Natal, 4001.

As I climbed up the mountain
I expected to see houses
But I saw ashes
I looked up at the sky to ask
the Heavens
About the talented and gifted
people of P.M.Burg

Where is Khopo? I asked
A woman with a mountain
voice
A woman with silky golden
voice
There was no response from
Heavens

Where is Jabu?
A woman with flashes in her
soul
A woman with flashes in her
soul
A woman with fires in her
heart
A woman with lion strength
Again there was no response
from the sky

*from a poem by Makhosi
Khoza from Pietermaritzburg.
The poem is in this book, and
the book takes its name from
this poem.*