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Teargas PROCESSED



HEALTH INFORMATION CENTRE.

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A seven month old baby girl called Maud Nzunga was lying inside a room when police threw teargas into the house. The house was full of smoke and the couch was on fire.

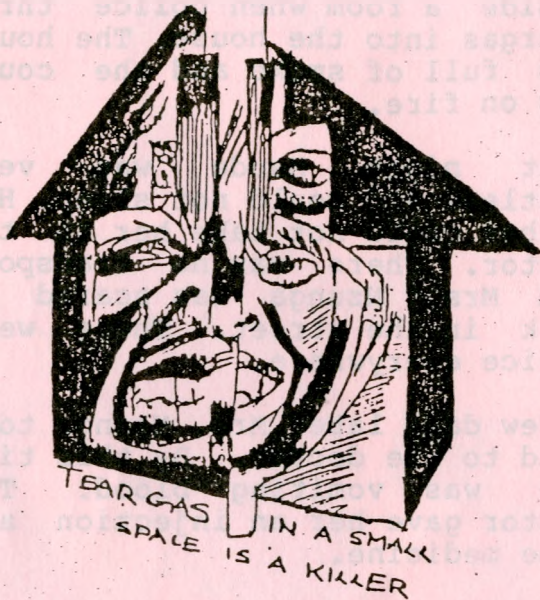
That night Maude was very restless and could not sleep. Her mother could not take her to the doctor. There was no transport and Mrs. Nzunga was scared to walk in the street. There were police everywhere.

A few days later Mrs. Nzunga took Maud to the doctor. By this time she was vomiting blood. The doctor gave her an injection and some medicine.

Two days later, Maud was much weaker and she was still vomiting blood. She was taken to hospital but died soon afterwards.



Mrs. Nzungu and many doctors believe that teargas is poison and can kill people.



Police often throw teargas inside buildings. They throw it into church halls, schools, houses and even clinics. Indoors, teargas is especially dangerous, because it does not get blown away by the wind. This means you will breathe more teargas. You may get very sick afterwards. If a person cannot get out of a room which is full of teargas, they might die.

Teargas inside is very dangerous for babies.



### WHAT DOES TEARGAS DO TO YOU?

Anyone who has been gassed knows what it is like.

As soon as there is a lot of teargas around:

\* Your EYES become itchy and begin to feel sore. Many people can't see in bright light when they have been gassed.



\* Your NOSE runs and it will start to sting. After a while you may not be able to smell things.

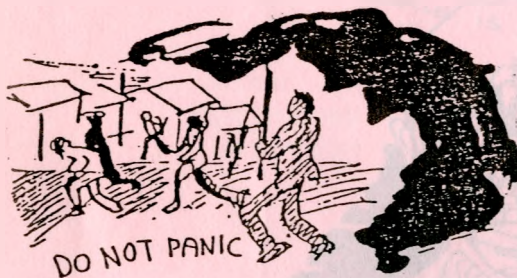
\* There will be a stinging pain in your MOUTH and THROAT.

\* After a while your CHEST will feel tight and will be painful. You may begin COUGHING. Many people may have difficulty in BREATHING. Later you may vomit.

\* Teargas hurts your SKIN. There will be a stinging pain on your face mostly around your lips. When you are hot and wet, the teargas does more damage. You may get blisters and skin will crack open. Sometimes this may turn into a bad infection.

Many doctors believe that teargas should be banned.

#### WHAT TO DO IN A TEARGAS ATTACK



\* Do not panic. More people will get hurt if you panic.

\* Try to get out of the teargas cloud. Check the direction of the wind and try to get to the other side of the cloud.

\* Breathe slowly and not too deeply. Do not hold your breath. If you hold your breath then when you breath you will breath very deeply for air. A deep breath will cause pain and burning.

\* Do not rub your eyes. It can only make your eyes worse.

\* Remember, if you cannot smell the gas, it does not mean that the gas has gone away. Teargas often makes you lose your smell.

## TEARGAS MIXES WITH WATER

Teargas mixes with water or sweat. It makes a poison that burns. That is why teargas burns your eyes, your lips, and inside your mouth. It can also burn your skin where you are sweating.

### As soon as you are out of the gas

- \* Try to find a cool dry place.
- \* If you can, you should change your clothes.
- \* If you are wet, you must try to dry yourself.
- \* Do not put water on your face and body. The gas will just burn you more if you do this.



### DRY YOURSELF IMMEDIATELY

- \* You can try to wipe your face with vegetable oil. Then you can wash it off with a lot of water and dry your face immediately.
- \* If you swallow your spit it will make you vomit. It is better to spit it out.



- \* If you have had a lot of teargas, you should try to see a friendly doctor. The doctor will give you medicine to put in your eyes, and will treat your skin if it has got burnt.
- \* If you are sick, especially if you have asthma, you should try to stay away from teargas. If you do get teargassed, you should try to get a doctor quickly.

### BE READY FOR TEARGAS

- If you think the police are going to throw teargas at you, you can get ready for it.
- \* You can wear long clothes like overalls. Tuck the sleeves into gloves, and push the bottom of the pants into socks.
  - \* You can wear a shirt with a high collar and a hat.
  - \* Some workers have to wear goggles at work. You can wear the same kind of goggles to protect your eyes.
  - \* The police are using different kinds of teargas. DO NOT PUT VASELINE ON YOUR SKIN. This makes some of the teargas go into your skin more easily.

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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