

'We can't pay higher busfares'**HOUSING CUTBACK****Government plans to lower housing standards**

THE government intends building even cheaper houses for low wage-earners in future.

The houses they plan will no longer have bare essentials like fences, washing lines, floor covering, ceilings, paint on inside walls or electricity.

This will mostly affect all those earning less than R150 a month.

At the moment houses built by the government are inadequate and people in all areas have emphasised their demand for adequate houses and for comfort and security.

The idea to build the cheap houses was told to local authorities by the Department of Community Development.

They said that the National Housing Commission, the government body that controls the money for the building of homes, has a shortage of money.

Community organisations are asking: "Where is the money we spent on rents and rates all these years? The government spends millions of rands on defence and sport. Why can't they spend more money on a basic right like housing?"

People say they are already suffering under the present housing conditions.

"The new houses will just mean many more problems for people already struggling to survive," a Bonteheuwel man said.

"The government has already been made aware of the problems we have with the present houses in the townships. As the houses get old, they fall to pieces and the authorities refuse to maintain them.

"How can they still build cheaper houses that will fall to pieces quicker and need much more maintenance, if they can't even maintain our houses now?"

"And if they expect the people to maintain the houses themselves, they must really want to see our people suffer even more. Where will people who can't even afford to buy food, still find money to maintain these houses?"

Get involved -says CAHAC

CALLS for people to become more involved in their civic organisations were made at the first annual general meeting of the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee this month. Cahac, officially launched a year ago, presently represents 21 civic bodies.

In addressing the close to 200 delegates and observers present, Cahac chairperson, Mr Wilfred Rhodes, said it was very important that as many people as possible be involved in making decisions.

To build strong democratic organisations meant more than a show of hands at meetings, he said.

"It calls for greater involvement by all affected people," he said.

The task was not for those with confidence to make decisions on

their own. Rather their job was to reach out and involve others in day-to-day work, he said.

"It is this collective involvement in decision-making and action which will be the real measure of how successfully we are organising," he said.

In his report as secretary, Mr Trevor Manuel, stressed the need to commit more people to the organisation.

"Truly people's organisations must provide a home for everybody in the commu-

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FLASHBACK TO 1980

Motor workers have taken up the fight for a minimum wage with great determination and militancy.

10 000 workers on strike

MORE than 10 000 Port Elizabeth motor workers walked off their jobs during the second week of July after management refused to raise their wages.

The workers, all members of the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU), demanded an increase from R2 an hour to R3,50 an hour.

They went on strike when an Industrial Council meeting between the three motor employers, Ford, Volkswagen and Gen-

eral Motors and their union had reached deadlock.

Workers have since changed their demand for R3,50 an hour to R2,50 an hour with increases up to R3,50 over the next 18 months.

However, the bosses have refused to budge from their offer of R2,15. At an Industrial Council meeting this week, they refused to negotiate until the workers returned to work.

At a packed workers meeting of about 3 500 later that day, workers

roared their disapproval when the shop steward reported back the attitude of the bosses at the Industrial Council meeting.

The Chairman of the branch committee of Ford, Mr Douglas Slingers, said the fight was for a decent living wage for all workers.

He said the workers had shown they were prepared to meet the asking for R2,50 instead of R3,50.

But the bosses were still taking a hardline. He said the workers would "Test" the

bosses the next day by returning to work. If they are locked out by the bosses, they would meet again.

The Chairman of the VW Committee said the bosses offer was an insult to the workers.

"Workers have to sell their labour. They want a share of the profits," he said.

The other Unions in PE which represents some motor workers, Macusa, has refused to support the strike so far.

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A spokesperson for one of the trade unions said:

"We did not choose to live in areas like Mitchells Plain and Guguletu. We used to live near our places of work. But then the government passed the Group Areas Act, and they began moving us left, right and centre."

Another speaker added: "Since the government moved us against our wishes, they are responsible for the big transport costs and should bear the brunt.

Unite

The people present called for positive action, with a representative of Mitchells Plain saying: "Only the people can fight the busfare increases. It is very important that all the people be united behind their organisation."

A BBSK spokesperson added: "Already wages are too low and we cannot afford the high rents and the price of basic foodstuffs. Any increase in busfares will mean less money for food.

After much discussion it was decided that all organisations present should lodge objections at the offices of the National Transport Commission.

Objections

The meeting felt it important to ask trade unions who were not present and the church organisations to support this decision and support the campaign against busfare increases.

The demands of the people were spelt out by a resident of Valhalla Park:

"The people must control the transport system. It must not be provided by private bus companies to make a profit. People should be charged a fare they can afford."

On Friday July 23, 1982 over 20 resident, trade union and church organisations including CAHAC, CTMWU, FCWU, GWU, lodged objections at the offices of the National Transport Commission.



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