

# grassroots

THE PAPER ABOUT YOU

December 1981

VOL. 2 NO. 9

Look out for your  
**GRASSROOTS**  
community calendar

Dates to remember, victories of the past - a community calendar for you and your organisation to help you plan for the New Year.



## Lotus River stage silent demo

RESIDENTS of Lotus River and Grassy Park staged a "silent" protest demonstration at the monthly meeting of the Cape Divisional Council towards the end of last month.

The residents packed the public gallery of the council chamber and unfolded banners which had been hidden in handbags and under jackets.

The banners read: "Talk to peoples' organisations; First the people, then the press; Direct representation, not dummy bodies; More and better roads,

halls, parks, creches. The council proceedings came to a halt. "Die Council het hulle amper vrek geskrik," someone said afterwards.

At first the chairman did not know what to do, then one of the councillors objected saying the protest "impaired the dignity of the council".

The chairman then asked the demonstrators to remove the banners.

Immediately two of the councillors spoke in favour of a motion that

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FROM Macassar to Schotcheskloof, from Tafelsig to Elsie's River, Nyanga, Guguletu and Langa, tenants are asking one question - Will my rent go up in the new year?

Since the "blue forms" also known as the income survey forms were completed by residents in most townships in the Western Cape, there has been widespread speculation and fears about rent increases.

### Meeting

"What are we going to do, we simply cannot afford it", a resident said at a rents meeting in Macassar which was attended by close to 400 people. Another concerned resident said: "No matter how small the increases, it eats heavily into our already small pay packets."

Tenants are angry because they claim that year after year there are rent increases, but they get nothing in return from the housing authorities.

"We see no service, we see no new facilities, our houses are poorly maintained, yet, rents go up and up".

In the wake of the forthcoming rent in-

# NO TO HIGH RENTS

creases, residents in Mitchells Plain, Schotcheskloof, Avondale and Macassar are already organising to take up the issue. Meetings have been held, pamphlets issued, house meetings are planned and "down with High Rents" stickers are being sold.

"This is one issue that requires unity and organisation, we must unite to fight the in-

creases", said a spokesperson for the EPC.

And, while officials are deciding on the fate of thousands of tenants, anger and fear is rising.

"Why don't they tell us exactly what the increases will be? Now we are kept in suspense up to the last minute so that we cannot get organised to take up the issue".

"The communities most affected by the

increases should work together as a united force", said a civic spokesperson.

In all the areas where people are organising, the general feeling is "we cannot sit back. When the increases come, we must be ready and organised to fight for rents that we can afford."

GRASSROOTS spoke to community organisations in Divisional

Council, City Council and Bantu Administration Board areas about the increases.

This is what we learnt.

- Rent for all tenants in City Council Housing Schemes will go up 1st January, with tenants in Mitchells Plain and Schotcheskloof being hit the hardest. The rest of the tenants will receive increases of between R2 and R3 per month.

Some of the reasons given by the Council are that repairs and rebuilding costs have increased. Fifty cents will be added to rentals because of higher wages paid to City Council workers.

- According to community representatives, the Administration Board has officially informed the people through the Community Council that there will be rent increases.

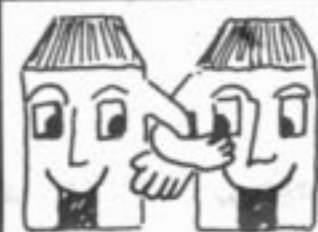
A resident said, "We have only been told that the basic rent will not increase, but that service charges for drinking water, sewerage and refuse removal will increase substantially." Residents in the townships are fearing increases which they simply cannot afford.

- The chairperson at a recent budget meeting of the Divisional Council announced that there will be rent increases for all areas 1st January next year.

Rents in Divisional Council Areas such as, Macassar, Scottsdene, Belhar and Lotus River are much higher than that of City Council Housing Schemes. This is because tenants have to bear the burden of the development of the

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## Civic Body for Paarl

AN ad hoc committee, which is to work towards the establishment of a community organisation, was elected at a recent mass meeting in Paarl.

The meeting was called to discuss the shooting of three children

who were playing in a river.

When a member of the local Management Committee told the meeting that there had been no need for to the children to have been playing in the river in the first place because

the municipality had provided a swimming pool he was jeered.

Later he was ordered out of the meeting.

The meeting also discussed general problems like the shortage of housing.

In some cases three

or four families (in some cases as many as 40 people) are sharing a house.

It was felt that there was an urgent need for a community organisation to take up the many problems.

area, when we pay taxes to the government?" a resident asked.

A Scottsdene resident who did not want to be quoted said, that he found out that his rent increase will be R18,00 for a 4 roomed flat.

Added to the basic rent are other charges for refuse, sewerage, water, community facilities such as health services.

"Why should we bear the burden of the development of the

# Lavender Hill starts civic body



The banner of the newly formed Lavender Hill Residents Association is held high after a meeting in the N.G. Kerk.

LAVENDER Hill residents have chosen the people that will represent them for the next year.

At a meeting on Sunday November 22, more than 200 people from the area adopted a constitution and elected the working committee of 25 people.

Mr Basil Theron spoke of the need to have a body elected by the people of the area so that they could speak with one voice at the Council.

Mr Theron as well as Mr Wilfred Rhodes, chairperson of CAHAC, called on the people of

Lavender Hill to stand together and fight the common problems facing them.

Mrs Hester who chaired the meeting also stressed the importance of standing together.

In response, a woman jumped and said she would be the first to stand together. This drew loud applause from the people at the meeting.

The woman told of all her problems and pointed to the bad state of the homes in Lavender Hill.

She spoke of the cracks and the insects

in the walls.

In passing a vote of thanks, Mr Aboubaker Jacobs said the end of the meeting marked the beginning of the organisation.

"Let us all work together and strive to make the Lavender Hill Residents Association a strong body," he said.

The birth of the Lavender Hill residents association was made possible by the hard work of the Lavender Hill committee.

Speakers at the meeting spoke of the need to have a properly constituted body elected by all.

# FOOD WORKERS IN GEORGE STRIKE

AFTER a long struggle the Food and Canning Union managed to get a foothold at the Table Top food freezing factory in George in 1979.

At the time workers were earning R12 a week. Conditions of work were very poor. For instance workers who knocked off at midnight had to walk home - and some of them lived in Pacalsdorp 20 kilometres from the factory.

The union started negotiations with management and had the wages upped to R20 and then to the present rate of R31,50.

Trouble started at the factory when a quality controller was ordered to train another worker to do her job. Normally all training is done at the factory's training centre and the quality controller, who is also the local union secretary, felt threatened. She refused.

## Protest

Management told her that there was no place in the factory for workers who would not take orders.

She resigned. A number of other quality controllers also resigned in sympathy.

The workers were unhappy and there were several short work stoppages in protest. They wanted the quality controllers to be rehired.

In the end the bosses said that because they were slack at the time they could not take the quality controllers back immediately.

But if they filled in application forms and were willing to do any job they would be rehired as soon as there

was enough work.

The whole of October was slack, but at the end of the month things picked up and management announced that it would be taking on workers.

A large group of work seekers turned up at the gates and 30 were taken on, but the 14 quality controllers who were also there were ignored.

When the committee tackled the bosses on this they denied that they had given any undertaking and said they had merely said they would consider taking the workers back.

When the committee reported back the workers demanded that management should address them on the issue.

At first the bosses refused but the workers said they would continue sitting until they came.

A representative of management came to speak to them, repeated what had been said to the committee and gave the workers five minutes to resume work or get out.

However, most of the workers continued sitting until clocking out time at five o'clock.

Next morning the 177 workers who had not returned to work were turned back at the gate after being told that they had "resigned themselves".

When the workers refused to leave the police were called.

They tried to arrest the vice-chairman, but when the workers protested he was left alone.

The workers then dispersed.

That evening when the night shift arrived, the committee chairman, who was working that shift, was blocked at the gate.

When the workers asked the foreman where the chairman was, they were told that he had resigned.

Also when the workers found out the next day what had actually happened, many of them joined the strike.

Management immediately began employing scab labour, bringing two busloads in from Mossel Bay alone.

Negotiations between union officials from the Cape Town head office on November 11 led to no firm assurances from management, who said they would need a week to come to a decision.

At the end of the week, Management agreed to take back 30 of the most needy workers. There was again a slack period and the others would be taken back as vacancies occurred.

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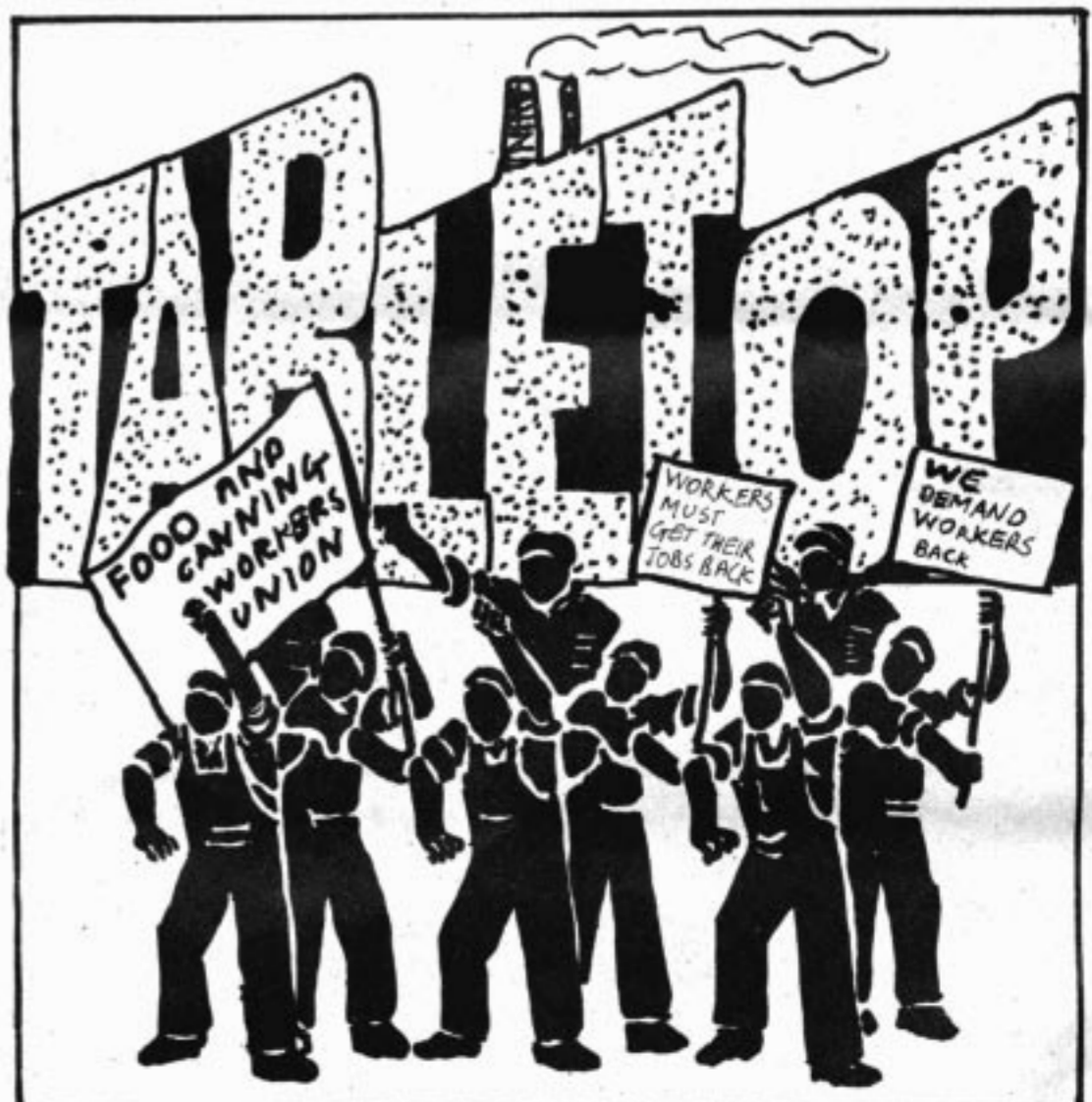
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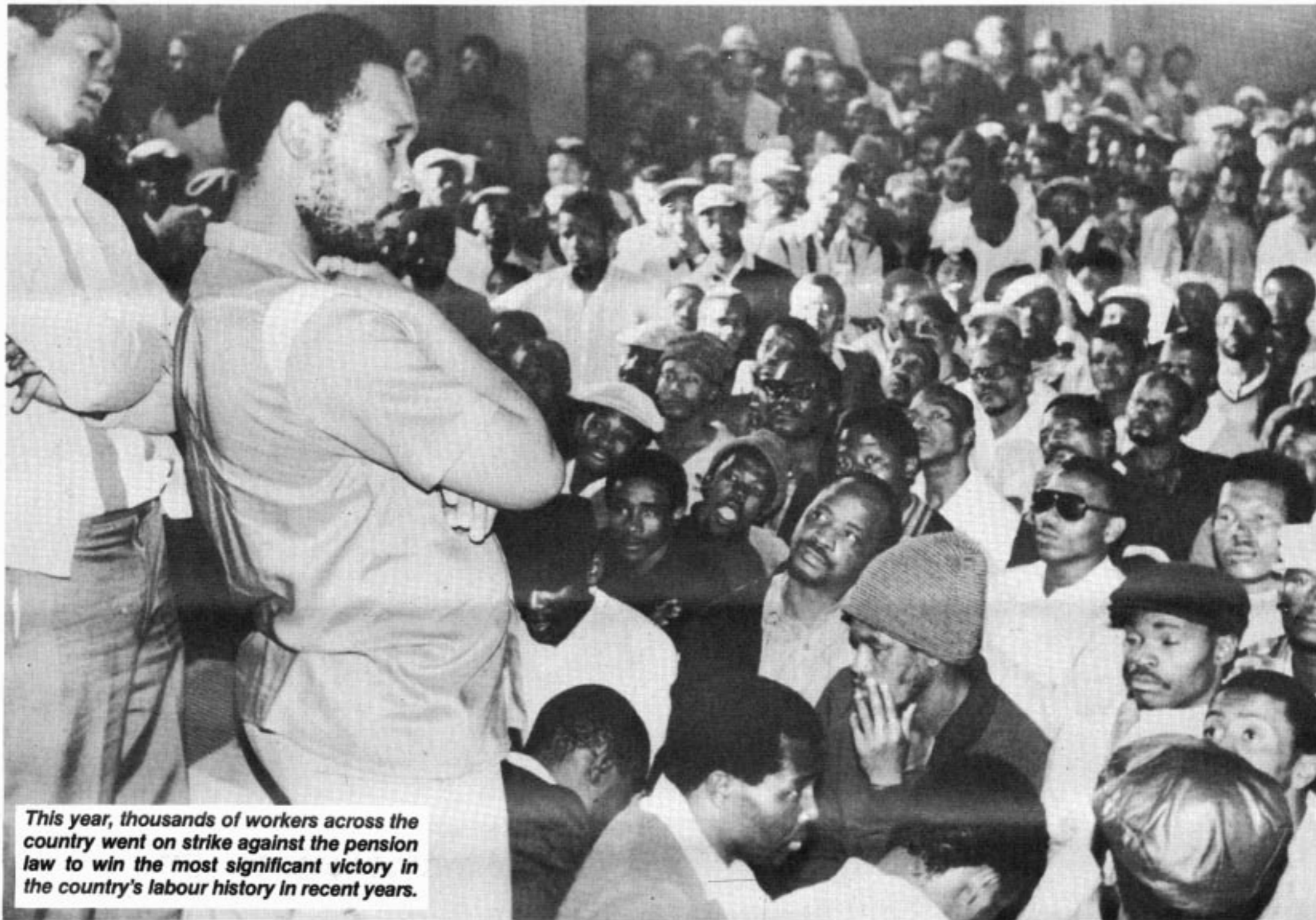
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# Organised strength of workers forced government to back down

**GWU members teach boss a lesson**



*This year, thousands of workers across the country went on strike against the pension law to win the most significant victory in the country's labour history in recent years.*

DETERMINED worker action — including a number of strikes — has led to an important victory — the government has decided to withdraw the controversial pension law.

This is what it would have meant if the Preservation of Pensions Bill had become law.

Workers who joined a pension fund and then left their jobs before pension age would not be able to withdraw their contributions.

They would have to wait until they were 65 before they could get any of their pension money.

This money could either be transferred to another pension fund at the worker's new job or kept in a special bank or post office account, but none of the money could be used.

Workers all over the country were very angry about this new law.

As we know in South Africa unemployment benefits are very poor and some workers, like those in Transkei, do not get any unemployment benefits at all.

Workers, therefore, need to be able to withdraw their pension money when they leave a job, so that they have

something to live on while they look for another job.

In many countries in the world old age pensions are provided by the government.

It should be the duty of the government to care for the old people who have contributed many years of their life to the country's economy.

In South Africa old age pensions are very bad. This is particularly the case for Blacks.

Even these small pensions are taken from people when they receive a private pension.

So this new law was seen by the workers as an attempt by the

government to do away with its duty to provide pensions altogether.

At the same time the government refuses to provide better unemployment benefits.

This means that workers would starve without their pension money when they are out of work.

The new law would also have allowed the big insurance and pension companies to become even richer. This is because these companies would now be assured of a very large sum of money that they could invest.

Many strikes took place all over the coun-

try because of the pension law, particularly in Durban and the Eastern Cape.

Workers demanded that their pension money be paid out immediately, before the new law was passed.

Workers felt that neither they nor their unions had been consulted when the new law was drawn up. So they made their voice heard by taking action through the only channel they could, on the factory floor.

Workers' unions demanded that the new law be dropped. They demanded that workers' representatives should be consulted

about issues that affected them.

They also said that workers should take part in the control of their own pension funds, as it is the workers' money that is in these funds.

It became clear to the bosses and the government that this law was going to cause them a lot of trouble, as the opposition to the law was very strong.

It is this which finally forced the government to back down on the pensions law.

This has been a big victory for the workers as it is through their united strength that this has been achieved.

WE, the members of the General Workers Union (GWU) at Cape Foundry stood together in unity at the dismissal of a fellow worker. We felt it was right to ask the Managing Director, Mr Rosenbloom why he sacked the workers as it was the third union member that was fired.

The boss refused to discuss anything with us as we are members of an unregistered union.

At an earlier stage, he Mr Rosenbloom, said he would not accept our workers committee even if we have the majority of the workers in the union.

He wanted us to join the registered Engineering Union, but the workers felt that the Engineering Union will not be able to help them change the bad conditions at the factory.

The reason why we refused to work was to ask Mr Rosenbloom to be fair to all workers and not to fire the members of the GWU.

By firing members of our union, Mr Rosenbloom was trying to crush our organisation in the factory.

But, we demanded our right to be consulted about things happening to workers in the factory.

In this, we have taught the boss a lesson that he won't forget — that workers are not prepared to just sit quietly and be treated as the boss pleases. Instead, we will fight for our rights as workers in the factory.

The Fired G.W.U. members



*Striking motor workers at the Ford plant in Port Elizabeth. The workers came out on strike demanding that their pensions be paid out immediately before the new pensions law is passed.*

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RESIDENTS in Hout Bay feel that the shortage of housing is the most important issue in the area.

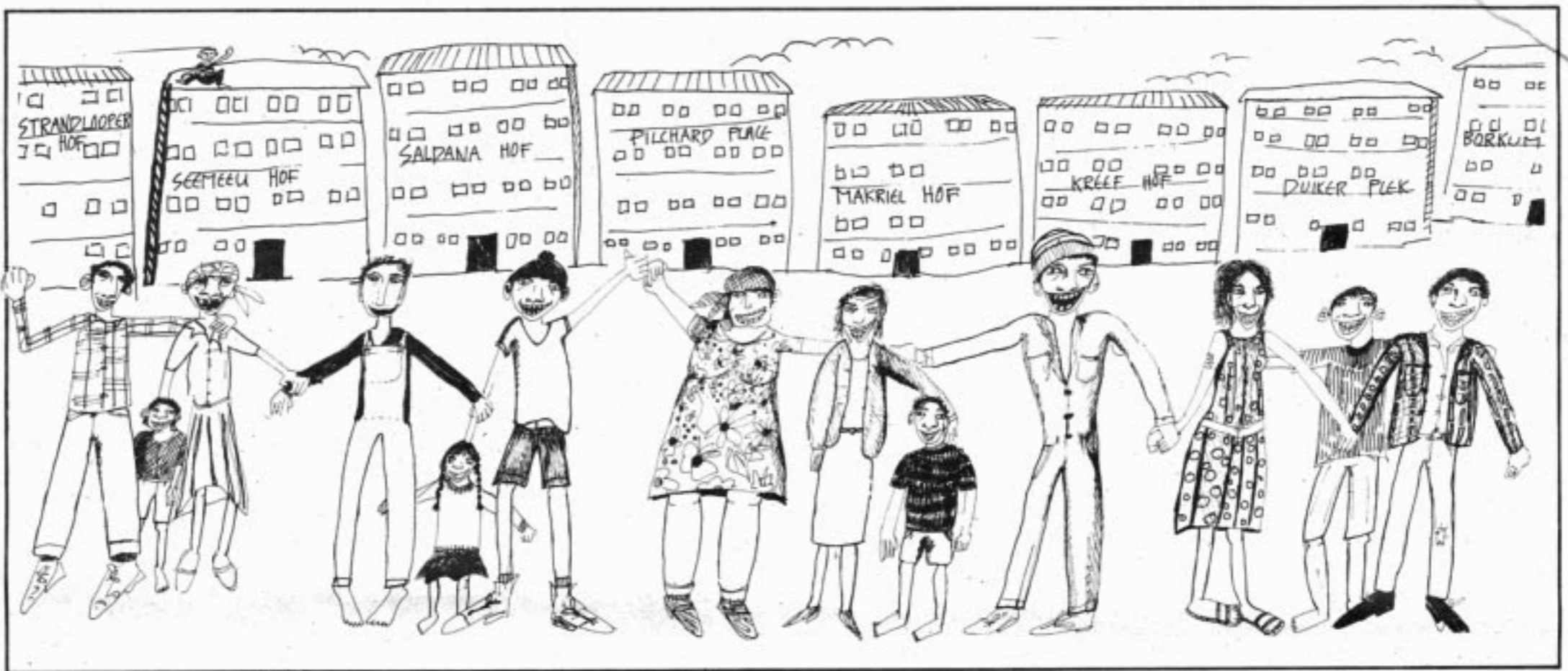
There are cases of as many as 18 people living in one home.

Over-crowding leads to poor health - caused by sleeping on floors.

It also causes crime, scholars unable to study, tension and the spreading of disease.

Residents believe more housing is needed in the area, but the Divisional Council regards Hout Bay as a completed scheme.

When the children grow up and marry they are forced to move out of the area and find housing in faraway Atlantis and Mitchells Plain.



### Separate

This means they are forced to break family ties and are separated from friends and the community they had always lived in.

They also have to give up secure jobs because of travelling problems.

The question that the people faced was how they could organise around meeting their needs and ways of putting pressure on the authorities to provide more housing.

"It is only when people stand together that things get done,"

said a resident.

As a start the residents started organising themselves into Block Clubs around block issues.

Already some of the Blocks have written collective letters to Coun-

cil listing individual complaints.

For instance a letter from Strandloper Hof Club quotes Mrs Adonis from flat 5.

"I am asthmatic,"

she says, "and so is my son. We suffer throughout winter because of dampness."

Mrs De Wet of No. 15: "As there is a crack in my bedroom wall, one is able to see

the road from inside the room."

Mrs De Wet of No. 13: "There are two big holes in the ceiling since 1980 where water pours through when it rains."

Dealing with these small issues people gain experience in negotiating with Council.

"This is only the beginning," said a resident. "We realise there

are also larger issues. We have to unite in the broader struggle in building a democratic society where we can form part of the decision-making process affecting our daily lives."

# Hout Bay residents unite to fight housing problems

## 'We don't want your excuses'

### Maintain our houses

ALMOST 200 Bonteheuwel residents marched on the offices of the City Council in Cape Town to protest against the poor maintenance of their houses. The residents were "escorted" to town by the police. But this did not stop them.

"For too long, the Council has ignored our grievances. We don't want to hear excuses, we want our houses maintained", they said.

#### Invited

The march followed months of organising in the area by the Bonteheuwel Civic Association (BCA). Mass meetings, mass complaints have been made, house meetings have been held to draw in as many people as possible into the struggle for decent housing conditions. But the Council would not listen.

At a recent mass meeting, the people of Bonteheuwel invited the Town Clerk and the Director of Housing to their meeting, "so that we could tell the council of our suffering".

Instead of listening to our grievances, they

chose not to come", a resident explained.

As the people waited for the Council at the meeting, their anger rose. "If the Council does not come to us, we will go to them".

And so, the people decided to march to the Council's offices to state their case.

"We have been complaining for months and nothing has been done. The council does not care about how we live", they said.

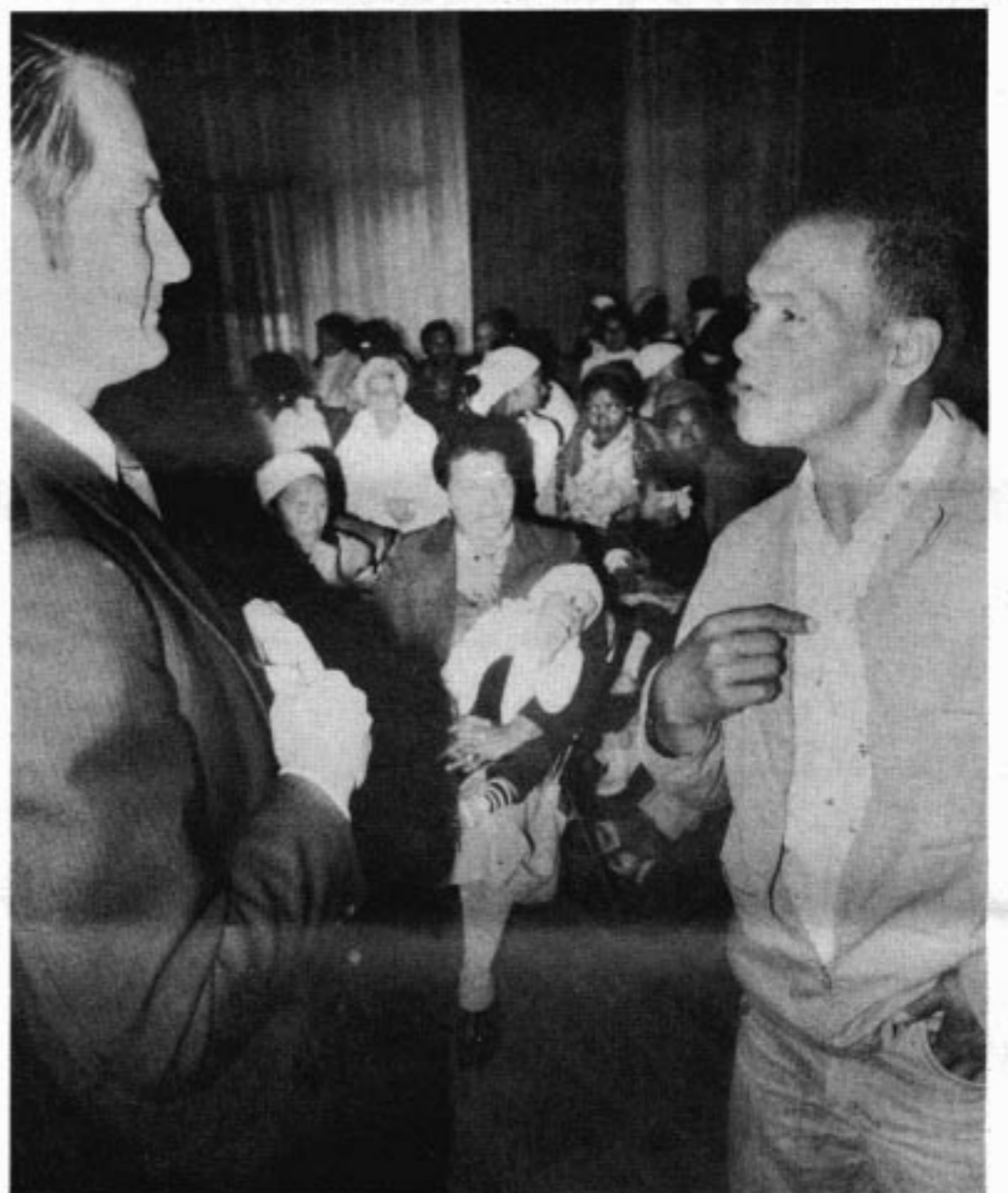
The Council officials would not speak to the residents. The people insisted, because they are all affected by the maintenance problem.

In the end, after much discussion, the residents agreed to elect a delegation of 15 to represent them.

The Council officials tried to buy them off by offering them tea, but they refused.

"We did not come here for tea, but to have our problems solved", said a member of the delegation.

A memorandum setting out the grievances of the people and their demands, was handed to the council. At this meeting, Council offi-



"For too long, the Council has ignored our grievances - we don't want to hear excuses, we want our houses maintained."

cials admitted to a long history of neglect of the area. They undertook to:

- present the memorandum to the forthcoming meeting of the housing committee,
- and to report back to the BCA on the outcome of their meet-

ing within a week.

The Director of Housing and the Deputy Director said that the final decision does not lie with them.

At a report back meeting of the BCA, the people of Bonteheuwel were highly dissatisfied with the Council's reply.

"We want our houses maintained" they said. The people decided to fight this issue to the bitter end. It is our right to live in decent housing".

And so the struggle of the people of Bonteheuwel for proper maintenance of their houses continues . . . . .

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# No Day Hospital for 100 000 in the Plain

THE campaign for a day hospital in Mitchells Plain is growing stronger as more and more people are being drawn into it.

Nearly 100 000 people live in Mitchells

Plain, but there is not a single day hospital in the area.

A resident said: "How could such an area be planned with no basic facilities, and something as important

as a hospital?"

Grassroots spoke to the Day Hospital Committee about their campaign, and how they are organising in the area. This is what they had to say:

The campaign was started in Rocklands. With the help of students, the committee canvassed the areas to find out how residents felt about this problem. We also sold Grass-

roots, and this gave us the opportunity to discuss many issues with the residents and how people in other areas are organising. The response has been encouraging.

To help us canvass the area, housemeetings were held. We divided the area up into more manageable parts of about 60 households.

After door-to-door housevisits, residents were invited to a house-meeting.

Already two areas have been covered in this way.

At these meetings we all talk about the suffering of the people of Mitchells Plain and how we should stand together to improve our conditions.

We also talk about the campaign and how residents can become involved.

The meetings have been a great success.

As one resident said: "It is the first time that we get the opportunity to state our views about the situation. We did not ask to come to Mitchells Plain, we were forced to come".

In this way many people have been drawn into the campaign, especially, to help with the survey.

The survey is another important part of our campaign.

We will not only be able to get the people's feelings about this problem, but also important facts to back our case.

After the house-meetings, we drew up the questions for the survey.

The volunteers assist in this way.

At first, a committee member accompanied the volunteers to complete the questions.

But now that they are more confident, they go out alone.



## UWO workshop builds unity

A WORKSHOP on how to organise was held recently by the United Women's Organisations (UWO) to help build the branches of the organisation.

"These branches are our organisations. Their strength is our strength" said a member of the workshop committee.

Thirty five delegates representing 13 branches from 11 areas all over the Western Cape attended the workshop.

Each delegate was responsible for taking back to the branches the ideas and lessons of the day.

A member of the UWO explained: "This work is important. This is how we can grow and ensure that everyone becomes actively involved. We will never be strong if only a few members are active."

The workshop also

aimed at forging links between the different branches of the organisation, which are scattered all over the Peninsula, and country areas such as Worcester, Paarl and Maccassar.

Delegates had the opportunity to discuss issues affecting their branches and how to tackle them.

In sharing experiences, successes and failures, the members felt that useful organising skills could be gained.

The burning issues facing women in many areas is the lack of creches and the plight of domestic workers. Parents and children are suffering because there are no creches to care for their children while they work.

The workshop decided that one way in which mothers could be brought together, is

by having house meetings.

In this way they could plan and work out ways and means of solving the problem.

Another problem is that domestic workers have to pay the Administration Boards R1,40 per month for "permission" to work.

Char workers who work only one day a week must also pay this money.

These workers do not get medical or unemployment benefits.

Because of the low wages paid to domestic workers, this is a burning issue.

The workshop felt that the different branches can bring women together to demand what this money is being used for and to fight BAAB on this issue.

Delegates felt that the day gave them new energy and ideas.

It brought people together as a united organisation. Delegates learnt

- how to identify issues to work on
- how to organise and to involve as many women as possible
- and how to work with other organisations.

A member from Hanover Park said that they found the idea of house meetings very useful in their work. In this way they were able to meet people and to organise more effectively.

These discussions will continue in the branches. In this way, the branches will feel more strongly that "we are part of a UNITED women's organisation."

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GRASSROOTS spoke to representatives from community and worker organisations in the Western Cape about struggles over the past year. We spoke about strengths and weaknesses and the task ahead in the new year. This is what they had to say.

# Our problems and the struggle to overcome it

**Grassroots:** What are the major problems experienced by Grassroots organisations?

**Community reps:** A major problem is that our struggles have been localised and isolated. Except for the bus fares issue, we have failed to take up broad campaigns cutting across the barriers of the townships.

**Grassroots:** Why do you think that we have failed to do this?

**Community reps:** There are many weaknesses in our organisations. Unless we try to solve this, we will not be able to achieve this goal.

**Grassroots:** What are these weaknesses?

**Community reps:** Many organisations have been overburdened with broader supportive action, for instance, for workers, and have tended to neglect their real grassroots work in their areas.

One of the community reps explained how they were affected.

"This is the example of the Nyanga people. By the time our association gave support for the people, we were so overburdened, because we were on the Wilson Rozanne committee.

"We also gave support to the Leyland workers and organised a bus load of people to go to the maintenance protest meeting in Bonteheuwel. There were just so many other things, and we did not take up a single issue in our area for about 3 months.

"We were so overburdened at the time, that we could not give the Nyanga people the support that they needed as much as we wanted to."

## Organisational Skills

**Grassroots:** What other problems have been experienced?

**Community reps:** Too few people have organisational skills. More and more people need to gain organisational experience as the real workforce is spread very thinly. Further, when taking up issues in our areas, many problems are experienced. There is often an critical assessment of our strengths and weaknesses and how to overcome our problems. We also need to pool our skills and share this as widely as possible. Community representatives also questioned whether broad mass struggles such as, the bus action and support for workers, are used to strengthen grassroots organisations.

**Grassroots:** We have seen many mass campaigns this year, there have been the marches by the EPC, Bishop Lavis, Lotus River and Bonteheuwel incidents. What have we learnt from this?

**Community reps:** An important lesson is that we can build our organisations through campaigns and draw in many people in this way. While we have seen great mass participation in this way, it has not been sustained in an organised way.

After a major campaign, people fall by the wayside. It is very important to draw them into the struggle in a more permanent way.

There are also too many ad hoc committees which have not been formally constituted into democratic people's organisations. An action committee may serve a purpose in the beginning, but some committees continue to function in this way for far too long.

It can open itself to operating ideologically as the same people remain on the steering committee from one year to the next.

**Grassroots:** Have there been special problems in the way community organisations and trade unions are working together?

**Community reps:** This relationship has been strengthened over the past year. The unions have come out in support of community issues which is very important.

But, the unions can play a greater role in making workers aware of community struggles, and to actively encourage their involvement in community issues.

**Grassroots:** We talked so much about the need to operate democratically. Do you have anything to add to this discussion?

**Community reps:** Our struggle is a struggle for democratic control over our lives.

Because we do not have a say in parliament, our people's organisations must be our parliament. It must be the place where we can voice our views and take decisions. Our organisations must also be structured in a way where each and every person's voice counts. Furthermore, it must also be the place where we are disciplined.

For example, when a city councillor wants to meet with the leadership in our organisations, they cannot do this without the mandate of the organisation.

**Grassroots:** What would you say has been one of our major problems this year?

**Community reps:** Although we have made great gains, there are far too many divisions in our own ranks. One of the community representatives said, "yes, the in-fighting has split many organisations. We have far greater problems to tackle.

Our fight is far greater than all our individual differences. We must be big enough to overcome this."

But, said another, "true unity can only be achieved in action, it is out there in the field where we are working together that these differences can be broken down".

# ONE STEP AHEAD

GRASSROOTS spoke to a number of representatives from community organisations about our gains over the past year. This is what they said:

"We have organised on many different fronts over the past year. There has been a mushrooming of democratic people's organisations.

"Residents have been organised into clinic associations, workers into trade unions, youth into youth organisations, students into SRC's and women into women's organisations.

"We need to strengthen this, and continue to build among democratic organisations at all times."

Another community representative felt that our victories gave our organisations a moral boost. He said:

"In this process, we have gained a broader political understanding and valuable organisational experience."

A word of caution came from a CARAC representative. "Our local rent, electricity and factory floor struggles must not be an end in itself.

"We must link our local problems with the oppression and exploitation of our people in this country and the struggle for change."



# THE WAY FORWARD

ANOTHER year has come and gone and once again time to look back to understand, to criticise and to learn from our experience. It is only in this way that we will be able to look ahead and tackle the task facing us in the new year.

One of the major lessons of the crisis of 1980, was the need to unify and build strong mass based democratic people's organisations in the communities where we live and on the factory floor.

This year, the challenge was taken with commitment and dedication in many townships in the Western Cape. The plan, through their organisations have stated demands loud and clear.

They have demanded to speak for ourselves, and when necessary, speak the streets in an organized way to make their voices heard. A firm foundation has been laid. The need now is to build, to strengthen and to get mass support.

Through community and worker action and short-term victories, we have come to believe that "we can win" and that we have the power to change our conditions.

When we are united and organised, the council and bosses must take notice of our grievances. The victory of the EPC, the Tafelberg residents, the parents and students of Meneberg and the residents of Lotus River, bore the fruits of united action.

But, it is not only in the communities where these struggles have been waged. The determination of the Leyland workers, the Blackman workers, the Camo workers and the workers of Wilson Rozanne in their fight for higher wages, better working conditions and the right to join unions of their choice, point to even further lessons for the future.

Over the past year, workers all over the country have taken up the fight against the proposed pension legislation with great militancy. This has not only been a major victory, but it has advanced the workers struggle in this country.

We also learned that our greatest gains can only be achieved when all the organisations of the people on the factory floor and in the communities, come together as a united force. It is only in this way that we can push forward in our march to a free and democratic South Africa.

This year, our struggles have been localised in areas such as Mitchell's Plain, Bonteheuwel, Nyanga, Bishop Lavis and many other areas. While we need to continue to build strong democratic people's organisations, we also need to break this isolation

and link our local struggles into mass struggles.

When 22 community and worker organisations came together earlier this year to fight Transvaal on the proposed buffers increase, the people won a major victory. This is the power of united community and worker action.

But, we can never achieve this if we do not assess our problems honestly and critically. We need to assess our weaknesses and look critically at an issue before mobilising around it. This means disciplined action, analysis of an issue and careful planning. There are many differences that have kept us disorganised and divided. It is a luxury that we cannot afford in the new year.

Another major campaign has been the struggle against the South African Indian Council (SAIC). It was important because it was a national campaign. On 4th November, in a massive display of strength, thousands stayed away from the voting polls showing their rejection of the SAIC and other soulless bodies which have been created to further the aims of Apartheid.

1981 has opened a new phase in our struggle. There have been many lessons, many problems and many gains. We must arm ourselves with this experience when we look ahead.

Let us not forget the message of a worker who said at a meeting earlier this year, "every time we loose a battle, every time we win a battle, we do it not for ourselves, but for all the people of South Africa."

With this message in mind, let us take up the challenge and renew our commitment to the task that lies ahead.

## Organise the Unorganised

THERE has been an increase in the militancy of workers in the Western Cape in the past year. More factories have been organised and whole new areas and industries have been opened up for worker organisation.

The democratic trade unions have grown and consolidated their position.

An important feature of the past year has been the slow but promising organisation of "Coloured" workers in the area.

For too many years "Coloured" workers have been frustrated and ignored by the TUCSA union.

"We have begun to see that a union is not a homogeneity. It is a work-organisation", said one of the workers who recently joined a democratic union.

In the Leyland, the Cape and other strikes and actions of workers in food and cannery industry, we have seen greater militancy.

Workers we also saw the impact of unity.

In the C. Foodstuffs strike we were an equal mix of coloured and African workers. "This has been an important lesson for us. Even if we did not win our demands we learnt the importance of standing together" said the workers.

Once again the workers have seen the practical importance of community support for their struggle. This was shown in the community support for the Leyland and Wilson Rozanne workers.

The past year also saw a much greater participation of the democratic trade unions in the struggles of the community. Support was given on the bus fares issue, the anti-Republic Day and anti-SAIC campaigns.

One of the most important events of the past year was the unity conference of the democratic unions in August in Langa.

The delegates from all over the country took a firm stand against the bosses and the state attempt to weaken the workers' participation in negotiation and their control over their own organisation. The industrial council system and the governments new legislation was rejected at this meeting.

Most importantly the first steps towards building greater unity amongst the trade unions was taken.

The biggest problem that the workers organisations still face is lack of unity, though.

The interests of the workers is still not put first.

Instead often leaders argue amongst themselves and compete for members.

Trying to cut such others throats in the mad scramble for members only gives short term gains.

is the long term if weakens the unity and strength of the workers.

Another problem is that there is not a close enough relationship between the workers organisations and the community organisations.

Community issues are not being discussed deeply enough in ordinary union meetings. The long experience of workers organisations is also not being used to its best extent in these joint campaigns.

## Build

As one union leader said, "we must build unity at the bottom as much as it is being built at the top. Strong worker leaders should be made aware of the community organisations in their areas and good people in the community organisations should be passed on to the unions so that they can help build worker organisations in their factories."

The number of workers in democratic unions is still small. There are still too many unorganised workers in the Western Cape.

Still too many workers being oppressed not only by their bosses but also by trade unions that do not practice democratic workers control.

One of the big tasks of the coming year is to bring the unorganised workers into democratic trade unions and to reform those unions who help the bosses control the workers in their unions.

"The democratic workers movement is here to stay.

"If we do our job properly, if we work together with community organisations, if we look at the failures even harder than we celebrate the successes, if we are not afraid of criticism, then we can make it even stronger in the coming year", said one union official of the tasks for the coming year.

THE most important weapons that the oppressed have against the oppressors, are unity and organisation.

When we are disorganised and divided, we are weak, powerless and voiceless in our fight against the bosses and the state. They have tried every means at their disposal to exploit our weaknesses.

They have also tried to buy off people by giving some more privileges than others.

Benings, detentions and the appearance of the police at community and worker meetings are all efforts by the state to disarm the masses in their march to freedom.

But, we have proved ahead with great determination and militancy because we know that our struggle is a just one.

Our fight for lower rents, bus fares, higher wages and better working conditions, is not separate from the struggle for a free and democratic South Africa.

We need to build on the foundations which have been laid over the past year. There are many problems facing our people in their day-to-day lives. There are many factories, many communities in the townships and country areas which remain unorganised.

The numbers of workers who are organised are still very small. Those who are organised into strong democratic trade unions are even smaller.

In the same way, the residents who are organised into democratic community organisations are equally small. There is therefore a great task ahead of us in the new year.

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# 1982 - A GREAT TASK AHEAD

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## ADVICE

# YOUR CHILD AND WORMS

DID you know that nine out of every 10 children on the Cape Flats suffer from worms?

This condition is so common that some parents may think it is normal for a child to pass worms.

For your benefit GRASSROOTS asked a group of health workers for information about this problem.

Can worms affect a child's health?

Yes. There are many different kinds of worms and they can cause harm in several ways.

Worms are parasites. They live on the food that their victims eat.

This is one of the reasons why children stay weak and underweight for their age.

A child with worms may be eating well but stay thin.

### Weak

Threadworms cause many tiny bleeds when they bore through the bowel of their victim. This loss of blood may leave the child weak and listless.

In severe cases, roundworms, which look like earthworms, bundle up and form an obstruction or stoppage inside a child's bowel.

Such a child will complain of stomach-ache, may vomit and will have a tender, swollen belly.

This is an emergency and the child must be

rushed to hospital for special treatment.

Do children get worms from eating too much bread?

Many people believe this, but it is not true.

Children can only get worms when they swallow worm eggs.

The sand is full of worm eggs because so many people who have worms use the sand as a toilet.

### Hygiene

Children play in the sand and often put their fingers or their toys in their mouths.

They may also eat vegetables such as carrots without first washing them.

Take a look at the drawing which shows how children get worms and you will see how children infect each other.

How can parents tell if children have worms?

Watch for the following signs:

- Vomiting
- Stomach ache and swelling.
- Runny tummy. Worms may be visible in the stools.
- Itchy bottom.
- Loss of appetite. Weight loss.
- Lack of energy for play or school work.

Remember, however,

that some children may have worms without having any of these symptoms.

What is the best treatment?

Doctors advise parents to deworm their children regularly every six months. This means giving children a dose of worm syrup or tablets.

Worm medicine is available at chemists or at local clinics and hospitals. Make sure that you give your children the right amount at the right time.

What else can parents do?

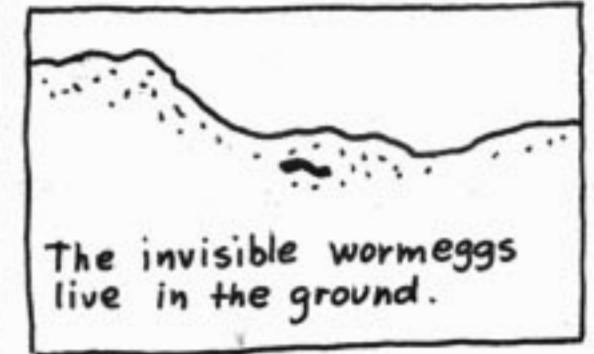
Parents can help to stop the spread of worms by

- Teaching their children to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before eating.
- Teaching children not to use the sand as a toilet.
- Washing all vegetables before eating them.
- Joining organisations who struggle for better housing for all people.

Those who live in areas which lack proper toilets and running water and where many families have to share these facilities run a greater risk of worm infection.



A child who has worms, uses the ground as a toilet.



The invisible wormeggs live in the ground.



Your child plays in the sand.



## VD - How to recognise it

VENEREAL disease (VD) is usually spread when a person who has picked up a VD germ has sex with another person.

Although many people say you can pick it up from the toilet seat, this is not true.

There are two main kinds of VD - these are gonorrhoea (also called "the drips" or "the

clap") and syphilis.

The drips in the man starts a few days after he has had intercourse with someone who has the germ. He feels pain and difficulty on passing water, and some pus drops from his penis.

A woman may not have any idea that she has gonorrhoea, because it may not show.

Problems come if a pregnant woman with gonorrhoea is not treated before giving birth.

The germ may get into the baby's eyes, and make him very sick, or even blind.

Everyone who has had sex with a person known to have gonorrhoea should be treated.

### Spread

The other kind of VD, syphilis, (also called "siff") is a common dangerous disease, also spread from person to person through having sex.

The first sign is usually a sore on the private parts of a man or woman. This may look like a pimple, a blister or an open sore.

The sore is full of germs, which are easily passed on to another person. It is usually painless, and if it is inside, a woman may not know she has it - but she can still pass it on.

The sore may go away without treatment. But the disease continues spreading throughout the body, and a few weeks later a

rash can even come out on the skin.

If proper treatment is not given, syphilis can spread to any part, causing heart disease, lameness, madness and many other problems.

Gonorrhoea or syphilis can even prevent people from having more babies or make the unborn baby deformed.

So, if any pimple or sore appears on your private parts, or you have a discharge, and you are not sure what it is, go to the clinic for advice.

In the meantime, if the man or woman think they have picked up a germ through sexual intercourse, the man should use a condom (also called FL).

### Information

It is also important to take your sex partner with you to the clinic, because he or she will also have to be examined.

The clinic near your home will help you - and all your information will definitely be kept a secret.

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## ADVICE

The next in our series on constitutions

# Role of officials in organisation

OFFICIALS perform an important role in an organisation. They run the day to day affairs of an organisation. Their duties have been clearly defined.

The most important officials are the chairperson also known as chairman or chairlady, the secretary and the treasurer. Other officials are the President and the Trustees.

We are going to deal with the duties and functions of these officials separately:

### Chairperson

The function of the chairman is to preside at all meetings of the organisation. His duties are to control the proceedings and guide the meetings.

In performing his task, he should be impartial and allow the members every opportunity to express his or her views on any matter which is discussed.

It is advisable that the chairman does not participate in the discussion of any motion as it would compromise his impartiality.

If the chairman feels very strongly about a particular issue and wants to contribute to the discussion, he should excuse himself from the chair and ask the vice-chairman to take over the proceedings.

The chairman is guided by the constitution. He must see that the principles and policy of the organisation are adhered to and any resolution conforms thereto.

The Chairman usually does not have a vote but where there is a tie in the voting of a

motion, the Chairman has a casting vote in order to decide the issue.

The Chairman must submit an annual report to the Annual General Meeting. In his report he usually has a wide discretion to deal with various issues of the organisation.

He usually discusses the goals of the organisation; the steps taken during the past year to achieve those goals and gives direction as to what steps are to be taken in the coming year for achievement of those goals.

The duties of the Chairman can therefore be summarised as follows:—

1. He controls the proceedings at meetings
2. He sees to it that the principles and policy of the organisation are implemented.
3. He submits a report to the Annual General Meeting.

### Secretary

The Secretary is regarded as the backbone of the organisation. He is entrusted with the task of carrying out the administration of the organisation.

The success or failure of an organisation can largely be dependant on him.

A good and efficient Secretary can build a strong and effective organisation.

It is, therefore, essential that the person who is elected as Secretary is capable of handling the administration of the organisation.

The duties of the Secretary are as follows:—

1. He calls the meetings

of the organisation in consultation with the Chairman and sends out notices of meetings to members.

2. He draws up the agenda of a meeting in consultation with the chairman.
3. He writes up the minutes of the meeting and presents it to the following meeting for acceptance.

4. He conducts all correspondence of the organisation and presents correspondence to the meeting for discussion.

5. He must see that all resolutions taken at a meeting are carried out.

6. He is responsible for the safe-keeping of all the records and documents of the organisation.

7. He submits a secretarial report to General Meetings including the Annual General Meeting.

8. He is responsible for the general administration of the organisation.

Because of the important role the Secretary plays in an organisation, he must have his finger on the pulse of all the activities of the organisation. This will enable him to report to the organisation.

### Administration

The secretarial report deals largely with matters of administration.

He can deal with the various activities of the organisation; the successes, shortcomings and failure of such activities.

He can deal with problems he encoun-

tered in the administration and recommend steps to improve the administration.

He can deal with the involvement of members in the activities of the organisation and how greater participation can be ensured.

The basic difference between the Chairmans report and the Secretarial report is that the Chairman spells out the goals and the secretary deals with the implementation of these goals.

For an organisation to carry out its function effectively, it re-

quires funds. These funds are collected by various ways, such as subscriptions, donations, fund-raising etc.

The funds of an organisation can be regarded as "trust monies" and must be used by the organisation to carry out its objectives.

### Treasurer

The person entrusted to safeguard the monies of the organisation, is the treasurer.

He is also an important official. Such an official should therefore be reliable, trust-

worthy and honest.

The duties of the treasurer can be defined as follows:—

1. He must safeguard the funds of the organisation.
2. He is responsible for the collection of monies of the organisation, the banking of such monies, and its safekeeping.
3. He is responsible for the disbursements of the funds of the organisation
4. He is responsible for keeping the financial records of the organisation together with other officials
6. He must submit a

financial report and a statement of income and expenditure to the General Meeting of the organisation including the Annual General Meeting.

The Treasurer's report deals with the funds of the organisation, how more monies can be generated and how such monies can be spent to realise the aims of the organisation.

In the next issue we will discuss the role of the PRESIDENT and TRUSTEES.

## Unemployment: A vicious circle

UNEMPLOYMENT is part of the big lie. State policy supports the industrial colour bar. Big bosses support machine power instead of people power.

"Having no money makes you miserable. It is important in a home. Without money there is nothing to look forward to. There is no life, no pleasure. It's why people get into trouble."

This is what a Manenberg resident said about the time when her husband was not working.

He was waiting for a Disability Grant.

The family did without electricity. They scraped money together to pay the rent. They made debts to buy food.

When the money came in it all had to go out again to pay the debts.

A vicious circle.

"You feel trapped. You can do nothing for yourself. You sit with a



heartache".

Neighbours helped with a loaf of bread now and again. Even they sometimes had to sell drinks, sweets, vetkoekies and broke vegetables "to make ends meet. Even those that get Disability buy and sell drink to make a profit".

Today the husband is working again. He will soon have a driver's licence to earn more money. This makes him

feel better about himself. He no longer feels depressed.

He can stand on his own two feet and work to provide for his family. He spends time at home with his family.

This is just one person's story.

On these pages there is a story about union efforts to get Workman's Compensation for a worker.

Fighting alone is a battle. You can join a

union. You can be part of a residents' association. Standing together gives power.

There are organisations that can help start co-operatives. They can offer advice about outlets. They may be able to help with equipment.

In a later issue of Grassroots we will talk about these organisations and how you can work together with them.

# ROBOT

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# Saturday morning play group for Harfield children

AT a recent meeting in Harfield, a joint parents/U.W.O. committee was elected to plan a Saturday morning playgroup for children in the area. The meeting was a follow-up of several weeks of organising by members of the Harfield

branch of U.W.O. 35 people came to hear about U.W.O., and to plan for the playgroup. Posters on the wall told of the U.W.O. about child-care facilities, and about how people in other com-

munities are organising to solve the problems that face them in their daily lives. Since the meeting, the committee has met to plan for the playgroup. It will start on 28 November.

# Community library for Lotus River residents

**Raw deal for Atlantis residents**

ALTHOUGH Atlantis has nearly 30 000 people, there are only three private doctors living in the town and the Day Hospital has no doctors at night.

At a public meeting in May one resident said: "In Atlantis you just can't get sick at night. If you do, you must die."

Because of the dissatisfaction, a survey was done by students and residents.

They wanted to find out what the people's problems were and to look for solutions.

### UNHAPPY

They found that two thirds of the people were unhappy with the health services.

Because of the poor hospital service, many people are forced to go to private doctors, especially at night. This costs them more money unless they are on medical aid.

The survey showed that only skilled workers, who earn more money, are on medical aid.

### Why is this so?

Most medical aid schemes are arranged where people work. So it isn't surprising that the bosses arrange aid for those workers who have more skills and help to make more money for the bosses.

The health of unskilled workers is not so important to the bosses - they are easy to replace if they get sick.

One of the most important points to emerge from the survey was that the poor, those who earn the least money and have the least skills get the worst deal from health services.

RESIDENTS in Lotus River have for many years battled to get a library to serve the whole of Grassy Park and Lotus River.

Even the Divisional Council has admitted that one library is not enough to serve the needs of an area which has 4 high schools and 24 primary schools.

A year ago the Grassy Park - Lotus River Residents Association collected more than 2000 signatures in support of a demand for a library in Lotus River.

A letter of demand with the signatures was sent to Council. They promised that they would place Lotus River third on the list (after Elsie's River and Belhar) for a library to be built towards the end of 1982.

In the meanwhile the Residents Association has decided to help students in the area by starting a library. At first the civic had a big problem finding a suitable venue but finally the Catholic Church gave the use of one of the rooms attached to their main hall.

Books and cupboards were provided free of charge by various organizations approached by the association.

### Contribute

Many residents in the area also contributed books which they no longer needed.

A Library Committee was started and they have been very busy sorting, cataloguing and referencing books. Members of the civic and youth clubs are taking turns to man-

the library.

Notices of the library hours were sent to high schools in the area. So far the response has been good. The library is continuing to grow as more books are donated and more residents and students join.

### Money

Space will probably soon become a problem.

Recently the Association was granted a sum of money to be spent on new books. A few weeks ago the Association was informed by Council that a library for Lotus River is to be started early in 1983. Site inspectors and planning is being carried out now.

If and when a new library is built we feel sure that there will be a need for an Association library.

## Disgust at beach apartheid

TO our astonishment we, the Hout Bay Harbour residents, discovered that the hated WHITES ONLY boards were erected on what we regard as our beach too.

After hearing of the winds of change in the South African policy regarding apartheid and discrimination against skin colour, we were disgusted when the direction of change indicated (in Black and White) that we are not

to have the use of the beach.

The residents of the Hout Bay Harbour now have no beach. Frequently families spend Sunday afternoons there, youth hold even-

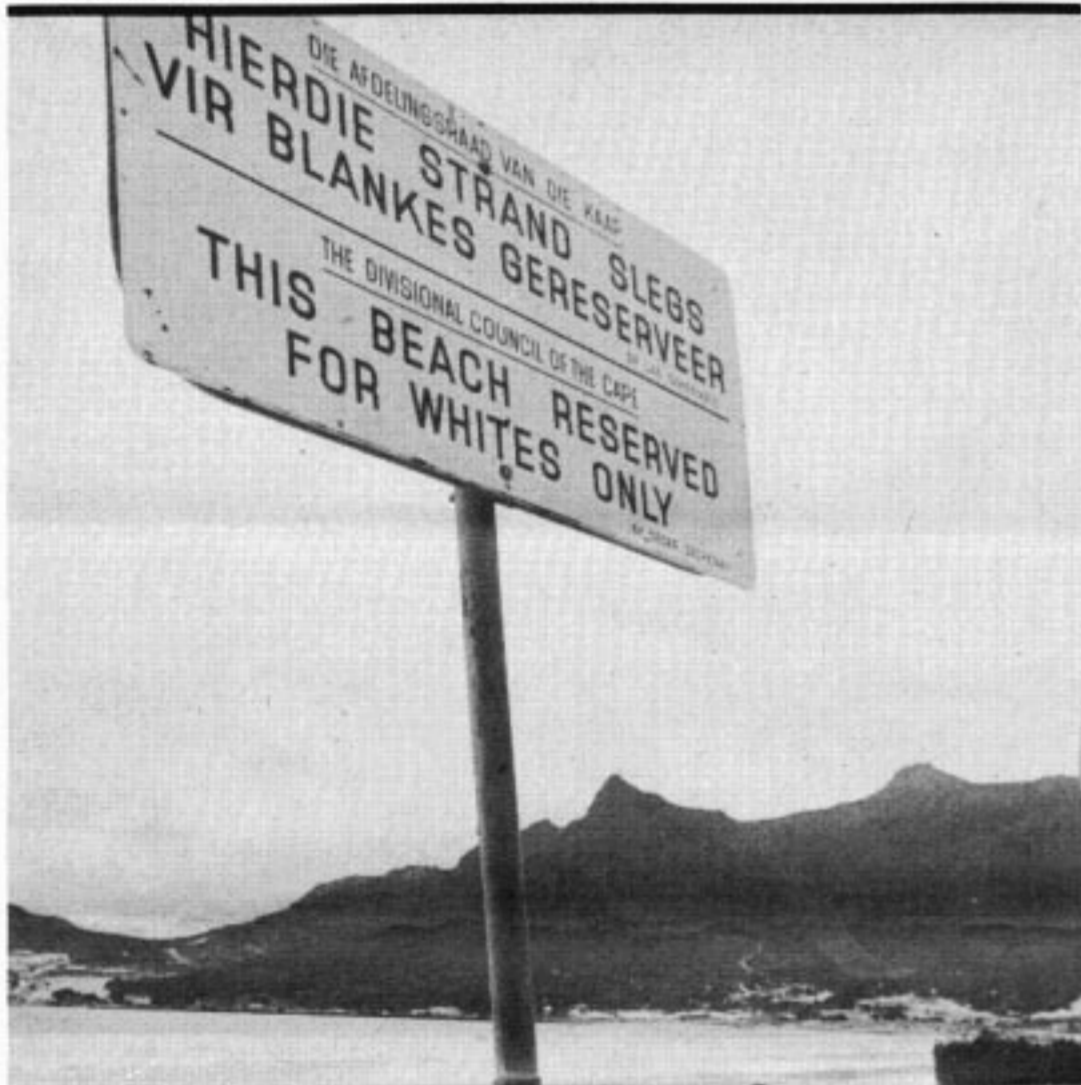
ing braais and children could safely play or swim.

The only other available stretch of beach has been taken up by the Hout Bay Yacht Club, used by rich Whites.

Our disgust at this injustice was clearly spelled out the following day, when we found that someone had uprooted these boards and hurled them into the Disa River mouth where they may rot.

A clearer expression of how we feel could not have been put any other way. WE must stand together and resist petty apartheid laws.

The Hout Bay Harbour residents



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# Rent struggle continues

FROM Durban to Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Soweto, the struggle for lower rents has been waged with great militancy and organised resistance.

The rents struggle reached its highest point when thousands of residents united under the banner of local organisations, such as Durban Housing Action Committee (DHAC), the Umbrella Rents Committee in Cape Town, the Zwide Residents Association and the Soweto Civic Association to fight the increases.

## United Action

Through united mass action, including marches by over 100 women in Durban and placard demonstrations in Soweto, the government and local authorities reading the mood of the people, were forced to back down.

The result was that the Secretary for Community Development announced at the beginning of 1980, that there would be no increases until the government had restructured the whole rent system. This victory was short

lived as residents in areas such as Soweto, Durban and Port Elizabeth were faced with increases later that year.

They took up the fight. In some cases there were boycotts of the increases while others, deciding that they were organisationally too weak, took the

issue to court — only to lose the fight.

In these areas, the rents did not come down, but there were other gains.

## Build

Communities were able to rally residents around the issue, raise awareness and build strong organisations.

But, in other cases residents became despondent as victory moved out of sight. An important lesson that can be learnt from the rent struggles in the past is that our fight is a long and hard one.

"It needs strong organisation, commitment and sacrifice if victory is to be achieved," said a civic spokesperson.

In the face of this, the government announced new rent proposals which came into effect in January this year.

The new system basically meant that a few — those earning under R150 per month — would get decreases,

while the rest would have to pay increases.

Out of 37 000 tenants living in City Council Housing Schemes in Cape Town, 11 000 were to receive decreases.

The majority were faced with increases of R1 and R2 per month.

Residents' Associations experienced difficulty in taking up the issue as individuals rather than entire communities were affected. They saw this as an effort by the council to divide the people and to prevent them from taking up the issue in the future.

Residents in Divisional Council, City Council and BAAB areas are once again faced with rent increases in January.

In most City Council areas the increases are small, but in some areas such as Mitchells Plain and Schotsches Kloof, the increases are way above what people can afford. The Divisional Council and BAAB areas will also be affected by these increases early next year.

Opposition is mounting in areas such as Mitchells Plain, Avon-

dale Estate, Macassar and Schotsches Kloof where the local residents' associations are beginning to take up the issue.

With rising prices and low wages being paid to our people, they simply cannot afford another rent increase.

The people are angry as there are no facilities and services in the areas.

Houses are poorly maintained, yet, the council wastes money on white elephants which are not used by the people.

## Organise

The Group Areas Act has uprooted millions and forced people into townships which are there to control them and to provide cheap labour for the bosses.

This is one issue which needs united community action in the new year. The areas affected by the increases should stand together and organise to stop the rent increases.

Decent housing at a cost that people can afford is not a privilege, it is the right of a people.



Woodlands residents protest outside the rent office against rent increases in 1980.

## How communities are organising



### Schotsches Kloof

SCHOTSCHES Kloof tenants are faced with huge rent increases in the new year. For some tenants, the increases will be almost double what they are paying at the moment.

A Schotsches Kloof resident said, "rents have gone up every year. We have no facilities, our community hall was repaired by residents at their own cost.

On top of all this, the money set aside for our area in the council's budget, has been used for other projects.

There is never any money for Schotsches Kloof, but the council has money for Hartleyvale and other white elephants."

The residents are

determined to fight the increases.

A spokesperson for the civic said: "We plan to work with other organisations and are already organising to fight the increases."



### Mitchells Plain

SINCE the Divisional and City Council sent out survey forms a few months ago to the residents of Mitchells Plain, the Electricity Petition Committee (EPC) has

been conducting house meetings in the areas affected by the rent increases.

The areas that will be most affected in Mitchell's Plain according to a City Council spokesperson are, Tafelsig and Eastridge, where tenants are already paying very high rents.

An income and expenditure survey is being completed on 500 houses to prove that tenants cannot afford the increases. 15 000 stickers have been printed and are being sold throughout Mitchells Plain.

A EPC spokesperson said: "The rents issue does not only affect us, the areas must come together as a united force. This is one issue that needs our united and organised action. We say, down with high rents."



### Avondale

THE Avondale residents in Elsie's River — a Divisional Council area — are fearing a rent increase soon.

Residents have had to complete the income survey forms, known as the "blue forms", which are usually followed by rent increases.

"You have to fill in the income of everybody in the house who works and they assess

the rent on the total", a member of the Avondale Tenants Association explained.

"The Divisional Council assumes that all pay packets are handed over to the head of the household.

In most cases this is not so. Some working children have their own commitments and only give a small amount towards the running of the house.

This is never taken into account when rents are decided upon."

The association is holding house meetings to discuss the issue. Everybody is concerned and there is a general feeling that the people should stand together.

"Some tenants are up to R700 in arrears in rent payments, we simply cannot afford it,

the whole community is agitated about this thing", a resident said.



### Macassar

SURVEYS done in Macassar and Scottsdene — both areas fall under the Stellenbosch Divisional Council — have shown that 27 percent of residents don't have enough for basic needs such as, food, after paying their rent.

Now, residents are faced with yet another rent increase in January next year.

At a meeting attended by more than 400 people in Macassar, residents decided to take up the issue.

An interim civic was nominated to co-ordinate the campaign and work towards the formation of a civic organisation in the area.

Included in the basic rent are other charges such as, rubbish removal, sewerage, local government, health and community services.

The people have to bear the burden of providing for essential services in the area.

For instance, a pensioner with an income of R62 a month pays a basic rent of R6,40. Other charges bring the total amount to R25,19.

Tenants are angry that they have to pay for services which do not exist in Macassar.

Speaker after speaker said at the meeting: "We must stand together to fight the increases. We simply cannot afford it".



Grassroots Community This Newsletter is printed by Esquire Press (Pty) Ltd. Grassroots Publications of Vanguard Drive, Athlone 328/9 South West House, Industria, from artwork Shortmarket Street, Cape supplied by Grassroots. Town 8001.

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## News in brief... News in brief... News in brief..

### New agreement at Leyland

NUMARWOSA, the union representing the Leyland workers in Cape Town, is busy negotiating a new wage agreement with management.

The Union has submitted wage proposals as its old agreement expires on 31st December 1981.

In May this year, almost 2 000 workers came out on strike for higher wages.

Management refused to give workers an immediate increase of 25 cents per hour.

Since the workers returned to work, there has been a 16 cents increase

per hour.

Although this is way below what workers demanded, "it is still something", a worker said.

Earlier this month, management forced workers to work overtime so that all outstanding contracts could be completed.

The workers were highly dissatisfied.

They know that they are not under any obligation to go work overtime.

Since then, management has changed its attitude and now consults with workers about overtime conditions.

### Parents' evening

ON December 15 the Hanover Park Civic Association Youth Wing will be having their annual Parents' Evening with the theme this year being "Youth in the Community".

At this event youth members will be able to show their parents and the broader community what they have earned and done in the youth for the past year.

The evening will be held at the Hanover Park Civic Centre. It will include singing and plays, all directed and acted out by youth members.

The sketches will look at the importance of community unity

and focus on some of the past community struggles.

Some parents will present a play about their involvement in the Civic Association.

The Civic's Children's Group will also be involved in their own play and traditional dancing.

### Anti SAIC - victory

THE anti South African Indian Council election campaign was one of the most successful political campaigns in South Africa in recent times.

Wide scale support was seen in pre-election rallies and this was confirmed in the extremely low poll.

### LOTUS RIVER PROTEST

From Page 1

representatives of the LR and GP Residents Association should address the full council about their grievances.

Eleven spoke against it.

The chairman said the laws of the land forced them to consult management committees.

A member of the public then shouted

from the gallery: "Whose laws are they?"

The council decided that the association should meet with the chairman of the works committee. The residents then again displayed their banners.

Feeling that they had made their point the residents then left shouting: "Talk to the peoples' organisations."



Almost all constituencies showed polls of less than 15 percent, and many were under 10 percent.

On the Sunday before the election more than 1 000 attended an anti-SAIC rally in Athlone.

### Lavis big walk

Bishop Lavis Action Committee (BLAC) are organising a Big Walk in the area on December 12.

The purpose of the walk is to raise funds for social events during the holiday season.

Blac has invited all interested civic organisations to take part.

The Big Walk is also a way in which people can show solidarity with Blac's electricity campaign.

### SSWA meeting

THE Social Service Workers Association (SSWA) held its Annual General Meeting in October.

A new steering committee was chosen. The association is planning a "Special Evening" on Thursday, 10th December at the Lutheran Youth Centre, 8th Avenue, Belgravia at 7 p.m.

A guest speaker will be talking on "The Role of Community and Social Workers in Constructive

Social Organisation".

All social service workers are invited to attend and to exchange ideas on issues which could be tackled in the new year.

This is your organisation. Join it and help make it strong.

### BLAC on the move

HOUSEWIVES from the Bishop Lavis Action Committee sent a delegation to Citizens Housing (CHL) to complain about the poor maintenance in the area.

A pensioner's door has been broken for the past seven years. He complained about this to the League on many occasions, but nothing was done. The civic members took up this issue and in no time the door was fixed. But that is not all. After pressurizing CHL, most people's doors all over Bishop were fixed.

The civic plans to take up other maintenance problems in the area.

"The people are beginning to realise the power of united action," said a member of the civic.

### GWU newsletter

THE General Works Union has brought out its first newsletter, Pambili Basebenzi,

which means Forward Worker.

The newsletter has finally arrived after weeks of hard work. Workers have written stories as well as union organisers.

The newsletter was printed in English and Xhosa.

The Union hopes to bring out a newsletter for its members on a regular basis.

### Avondale maintenance

RESIDENTS in the flats in the section of Elsie's River which used to be known as Louw's Bush are upset because the Divisional Council refuses to maintain their homes.

A member of the Avondale Tenants Association which is active in the area said Div. Council only maintained for the first three months.

After that all repair costs had to be carried by the tenants.

### Earnings

The member who works as a char for eight rand a week pays R30 rent which is almost her total earnings.

"Fortunately I have three children in the house who are working," she said.

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