

shacks were demolished and the Soweto Council was taken to court. Several meetings were also held by different groups. What interests me most is what Ambition Brown told the people of Orlando about this shack problem. In what looks like his election campaign into the Soweto Council, he blames the people of Noordgesig for the shortage of space in Orlando!

I do not know what Mr Brown wants to achieve by making such irresponsible suggestions. Does he not realise that the people of Noordgesig are put there by the same fate that put the people of Orlando shacks where they are?

I think if Brown wants a seat in the Soweto Council he should not use the people

of Noordgesig to get there. If he wants to fight this shack issue, he should fight WRAB and the Soweto Council, and not the coloured people.

Izwi,

Can you give some information about this thing called a 'housing committee' Rev Buti mentioned in his talk at the Stadium last time. What is this housing committee, what will it do and who are the members of it?

J.K.

(We also do not know very much about this committee yet. It was said that it would consist of people

from different professions, for example, a social worker, a teacher, a policeman and so on.

We ourselves think that such a committee is desirable, but we believe that it should be an elected committee, representing every section of Alex. The township could easily be divided into four areas - east and west of Selborne, Frogtown and Up-town. And in each quarter, maybe two representatives could be elected by residents. In this way the members of the committee might or might not include such people as Rev Buti has in mind, but it would depend on the people of Alex directly, whom they wanted to represent.)

Editor

Lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi



"I work at a Wynberg garage (Shell). We are three women and two men. We all pour petrol, but we women don't only pour petrol, we also clean the garage, and make tea for the bosses and the other workers. We earn R54 per week and the men earn R64 per week. I am inclined to say that this R54 is only for pouring petrol, not for the other work which we do."

The woman speaking above is clearly useful to capital. Her experience is a good example of the experience of women in our society. They are doubly exploited - they are paid lower wages than men for doing the same work that men do. And they do unpaid domestic work - at home and at the work-place - for men.

The position of women in society is that of being treated as though they are inferior to men. This is a wrong practice and a false ideology, which has got to be

challenged since it leads to the disunity of workers.

By ideology and tradition men see themselves as being above women. This is reinforced by all the common sayings about women ("Dietela etsegadi ke pele di wela lengopeng"). Men say that the reasoning power of women is lower than their's

Men and women can easily do the same kind of work. In societies where they have done different kinds of work, it is because this has been useful in organising work efficiently. But a division between men and women does not mean that one kind of work is better than the other. Why then is it now considered that women's work is inferior to men's work?

Under Capitalism

At a certain point the capitalist system developed. Under this system, anybody who works but does not produce goods which can be sold to make money, is not considered to be a productive worker. Hence the work that is traditionally a woman's work — housework, childcare and so on — suddenly seems inferior.

Necessity of Housework

Although it is obviously useful and necessary housework does not produce objects which can be sold for profit. It is therefore regarded as inferior work, and women are then seen as inferior people. ("Mosadi ke tshwene — o jewa mabogo")

Power of Money

In most cases the man is the boss in the home, because it is he who earns the money. A family cannot survive without money, and whoever has control over the money has authority in a home. (In fact, in a household where a woman is the only money-earner, she will be the boss). When there is unemployment, men are given preference for jobs so that many women do not go out to work at all . . . they stay at home and do 'inferior' work — housework, for which they are not paid. When a woman does get a job, she almost always gets paid less than a man. Men think that they are by nature above women, that they should be the only ones who make decisions for the family and for the woman, and that women should just carry out their decisions.

(Ga go poo pedi mo lapeng)

Women as we can see are not regarded as reasoning beings equal to men. They are always put in an inferior position and this excludes them from decision making in the family and in society as a whole. Most married and unmarried women are turned into property by the men they live with.

Domestic Tyranny

Whenever a man is hungry or has dirty clothes, or the house is dirty, he looks at the woman with tyrant eyes. It seems natural that women should do the housework. "*Mosadi o tshwanetse go tsoga ka matsha a feele lebala.*" But in fact it is not natural. The present society teaches people that what you do, another person should not do — that is, a man cannot do the housework, and a woman cannot make decisions on her own. In fact men benefit from not having to do the housework, from having their wives serve them and from having better jobs. When any worker returns from work, he or she is tired and hungry — but a man sits down and expects to be rested and fed, while a woman has to continue working late into the evening looking after the man and the children.

These benefits that men enjoy hide the real conflict in our society (being the conflict between the owning class and the worker class) and retard the workers' movement to progress. Instead of fighting the employers, men and women fight each other.

"It is bad to be a woman because you are a worker who suffers from the capitalist's exploitation at the factory, and then from men's domination in the home." In fact this domination of men in the home is not just a private issue between men and women. Women's work in the home also directly benefits the capitalists. It is the appearance that in the home women labour for men, but in reality women are labouring, again, for the capitalist.

If we just look at the work women do at home — looking after children, cooking, washing, keeping the house clean — we can see that the capitalist wouldn't be able to exist without all this.

The woman creates labour-power for the capitalist. She looks after children who will later be used to produce profit.

Also, the capitalist needs a healthy worker each morning who has been well fed and who is not tired, otherwise the worker will not produce enough profit for the boss on that day. It is the woman who sees to it that the worker goes back to work each day able to produce a maximum.

The capitalist manages to use this inequality between men and women, at the work place. When both men and women work at the same place doing the same job, they are paid different wages — the woman's less than the man's. A woman is paid less than men not because the man has more skills, or a longer record of service at the workplace, but only on the grounds that she is a woman. This can be seen as a strategy of the capitalists: dividing the workers, so that they compete amongst themselves along sexual lines. It seems that there are two classes of workers — a good, well-paid efficient class of men and an inefficient badly paid class of women. This division of the workers interests makes it difficult for them to unite against the capitalist.

This strategy of capitalists has an effect on men and women — they actually see that in the workplace they are unequal, therefore they feel that it is natural they should be unequal. But in fact it is not natural. What makes it seem natural is the unequal society in which we live.

The real conflict

The dominance of the man in a family should be discouraged, since it is something that hides the real conflict in our society, which is between a worker and a capitalist. Because of dominance, capitalists benefit a lot. What the woman worker from Shell says, shows how employers benefit from employing women — they do not have to employ separate people who will clean the garage and prepare tea. Instead, because women are there they have to overwork — apart from pouring petrol they do housework and are unpaid for that job. It is the same in the home — women are not paid for the work they do there. Then, on top of this, the Shell employers pay her less than they have to pay the men.

From the above we see that women often perform unpaid work. To fight for progress we need to do away with man's domination, that is, abolish slavery within the family and establish equality between men and women of the working class to fight the capitalist class.