

# Who faked it?

IN the early hours of a cold morning last month, thousands of mysterious pamphlets were distributed throughout many townships.

The pamphlets were fake copies of a Cape Areas Housing Action Committee newsletter.

No one has claimed responsibility for the fake and the government has denied having had anything to do with it.

The fake quotes CAHAC chairperson, Mr Wilfred Rhodes as saying that we can afford high rents if we have smaller families,

work harder for our bosses and spend our money wisely.

In fact, in the original newsletter Mr Wilfred Rhodes says that we need to be strong and well organised. He mentioned different occasions when the people stood together and were victorious.

Among other occasions he mentioned the fight by the Electricity Petition Committee for the changing of the electricity due dates and fight against the increases in busfares last year when, in both, we were successful. Mr

Rhodes appealed to the people to organise themselves.

Throughout the forged copy the policy of CAHAC is described as being one of consultation.

"We must see our local management committees. They are our legitimate elected bodies. They represent our community in the true sense of the word. By supporting them we give them more power to negotiate with the City Council and the Government," the forged copy goes on to say.

The caption on the original newsletter was changed to read: 'Support your local management Committee. You voted them in'.

The original newsletter shows a picture of the people at the recent rally in the Westridge Civic Centre. The caption refers to the spirit of unity of the people. About 3 000 people attended the rally.

There were also other changes made to the illustrations on page one of the newsletter. The newsletter now calls for consultation.

# FARES SHOCK

**SHOCKING** details of huge profits by the company that controls nearly all bus services in

Cape Town have been uncovered in an investigation by people opposed to the latest bus fare increases.

The investigation into City Tramways has shown that:

- The company is making very large profits and these profits are getting bigger every year. Over the whole period from 1974 to 1980 the average profit was 35% per year.
- Over the last three

Transport costs have gone up once again.

Both the private companies, which run the buses, and the state departments controlling trains, have ignored the people's hardships.

Despite the increases, conditions remain the same.

that it needs to buy new buses.

The investigation into the company has revealed the following details:

Most the profits of City Tramways go to Tollgate Holdings, a bigger company that owns City Tramways. Tollgate set up finance companies that lent the money to other people at high interest rates. Tollgate says that these companies have nothing to do with their bus companies. But the finance companies were very profitable because they got a lot of their money from Tollgate (that is from City Tramways and the other bus companies at low interest rates).



In 1980 Tollgate sold their finance companies and some properties because they decided to concentrate on buses.

They received R30-million for this. In addition they got back R27-million that they had lent to the finance companies.

Suddenly Tollgate had R57-million at its disposal. But they didn't use it to buy new buses they said they needed. Instead they paid out R48-million to their

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## UWO holds congress

ON April 3 and 4, the United Women's Organisation (UWO) held its second Annual Conference at the Lutheran Youth Centre in Athlone.

More than 200 elected delegates and observers from the 18 organised Branches of the UWO as well as invited visitors, attended the Conference.

The three guest speakers - Mrs Dora Tamana, Mrs Gloria Mnikina and Mrs Amy Thornton - praised the UWO for the hard work of the past year. Mrs Mnikina urged the UWO to "call women everywhere - in the streets, down the drains, in their homes and at their work - because women bear the greatest burden and carry the greatest responsibility."

Amy Thornton urged: "Out of Conference must come not just the spirit from our songs but the real decisions of how we are to carry on."

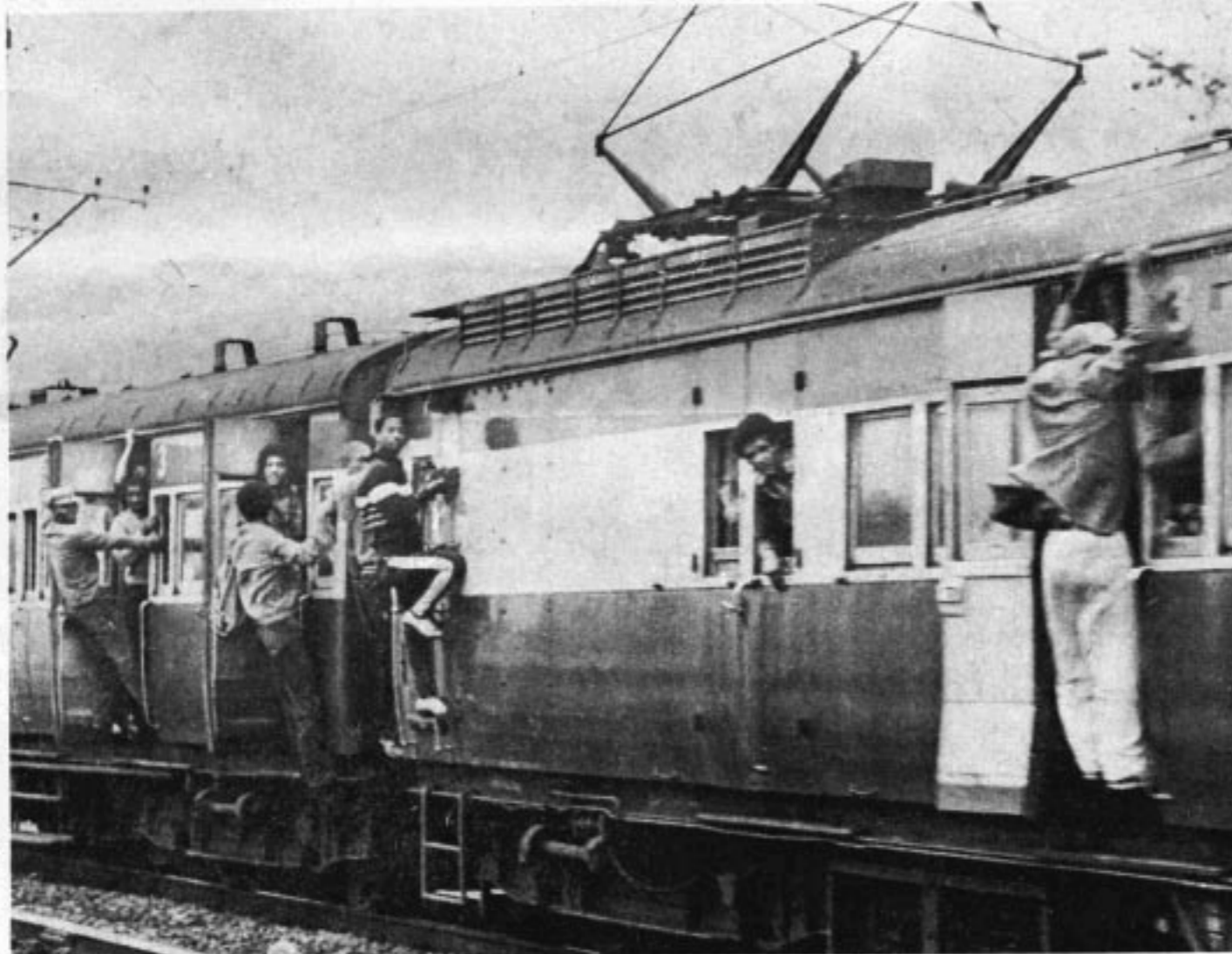
And this is exactly what happened at this Conference. The UWO members and their visitors talked of their problems in building Branches, the practical difficulties of organising women, raising funds and getting to meetings.

Out of this frank discussion, came resolutions to

- plan the work better and to have organising workshops to help the planning

- ensure that all members work and participate fully in the organisation

- build the Branches in the areas through practical work



Despite increases in train fares, conditions remain the same.

## 'We need to be strong' - CAHAC

DELEGATES to the CAHAC meeting last month agreed that stronger organizations were needed to put a stop to rent increases.

They resolved to go back to their areas and take up some of the many problems which residents experience, and in so doing, build their organizations.

While Cahac will not presently campaign for decreased rents, it does not believe that the struggle for 'rents we

can afford' is over.

"Far from it," said community representatives.

"The struggle must continue," they said.

### Questions

"The form it takes must be decided by strong organizations; organizations strengthened by taking up the problems which the people experience."

In assessing the success of the four-month-

long campaign, Cahac delegates raised many important questions which every organization must carefully consider.

- Was there sufficient activity in the community while the deputation met with the minister?

- Did the campaign lose its spark because people expected immediate relief?

- Was the activities in all areas watched closely enough?

- Are our organisations any stronger now?
- Did we not show that many different organisations can work together?
- Did we not learn

more about ourselves, our organisations and the government?

- Have our people not learnt to support each other, whether they are affected or not?

## Grassroots unbanned

THE ban on the December issue of GRASSROOTS has been lifted.

GRASSROOTS volume 2, number 9 was banned for distribution in January. After representations were made to the Publications control board, the ban was lifted.

The GRASSROOTS calendar is banned for distribution but not possession.

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# LABOUR FOCUS

## Fighting fires for low wages

MOST Capetonians were deeply concerned at the recent fire which devastated parts of Devil's Peak and Table Mountain. They were concerned at the destruction of fynbos and trees which left such ugly scars on the mountain side.

But how many people spared a thought for those workers from the Parks and Forestry Department whose job it is to extinguish fires?

### Dangerous

Fire-fighting can be a very dangerous business. High up on the mountain there are no clearly defined paths, so workers have to cut their way through the bush.

The intense heat dislodges large boulders and fire-fighters are showered with burning cinders from trees. Thick clouds of smoke make breathing difficult and sting their eyes.

### Wages

Wages paid to the fire-fighters are low. As employees of the City Council, labourers are paid from R44.16 - R58.42 per week. The wages of attendants range between R48.76 and R64.86 while lumbermen receive between R61.64 and R75.90 per week.

The minimum hourly wage for council employees is 96c per hour.

This does not compare well with workers in the automobile industry, for example,

who have a minimum wage of about R1,75 per hour.

Over the last few years wages and conditions of employment have improved for the employees of the Parks and Forestry Department.

This is not, however, because of the generosity of the City Council. It is a direct result of the struggle for workers rights fought by the C.T. Municipal Workers Association, which represents some 11 000 workers.



## WORKERS WIN PENSION CHANGES

RECENTLY the Metal Industries Pension Fund Board approached a number of independent unions to get their views on the pension fund operating in the Steel and Engineering industry.

This is the same condition as the proposed Pension Bill which was withdrawn last year as a result of many strikes all over the country. This is the same condition which was proposed Pension Bill which was withdrawn last year as a result of many strikes all over the country.

The Metal Industries pension fund has been a major source of worker dissatisfaction. The fund is an industry-

wide scheme, and workers have to be members.

A major grievance is the 'preservation clause' which up until recently has meant that if a worker left the industry he could not get his pension payment back until he was 65.

This is the same condition which was proposed Pension Bill which was withdrawn last year as a result of many strikes all over the country.

Workers would like their own and management's contributions paid out when they leave a factory.

With high unemployment workers often

don't get new jobs easily and they need this money to survive during this period.



Another grievance is that the pension age of 65 laid down by the scheme is far too high. The average life expectancy of Blacks is 57.

The workers also felt that the benefits are too low as the total assets of the fund are nearly R290 million.

To overcome these grievances workers would like to see new rules drawn up in consultation with worker representatives.

In the meetings with the Board workers representatives were told that the preservation clause had already been changed to six months.

However, workers feel that to wait six months for their money is still too long.

The Board has also indicated many other changes including the

choice of retirement age between 55 and 65.

It is through the pressure of workers in the Steel and Engineering industry factories, particularly those organised into the independent trade unions that these changes have been made and further changes are being considered.

It is also a result of the increasingly strong organisation of these workers into unions of their choice that the bosses and their organisation are beginning to consult its workers over issues that affect them.

This has been won as a result of the bosses realising that workers

will no longer put up with no channels existing for them to voice their demands.

These workers are increasingly demanding control over their own lives which in our society is generally denied to them at work and outside of work.

But there are still many millions of workers in the Metal industry and outside it who are not yet organised.

It will be the job of the independent unions to establish firm grassroots organisation on a much larger scale to increase the voice of the worker all over the country.

## Retrenchments can be fought

WITH the economy slowing down, it is clear that 1982 is going to be a tough year for workers.

However, despite the economic slowdown, retrenchments are not inevitable. Many workers believe that once employers have told them they have to be retrenched, this is inevitable. But this is not true.

Ways and means have been found to avoid retrenchment. At Kelloggs, workers had a stoppage last year when six of their colleagues were given retrenchment notices.

Negotiations between the union and management followed and the union was given the right to investigate the manning levels in the plant.

The shop stewards found six empty spaces, and all workers were taken back at the same rate of pay and with no change in conditions of service.

The Kelloggs example highlights the need for negotiation between workers and management over retrenchment.

Stoppages can be avoided if only management would talk to the

union beforehand.

At Sigma, where the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (NAAWU) is recognised, discussions on retrenchment started two months before they happened.

Negotiations were about the possibility of avoiding retrenchment. Discussions also took place over an acceptable retrenchment procedure. The NAAWU proposals were as follows:

\* The union should be given at least one month's notice of any retrenchment.

\* Proper planning of production should take place to ensure that account is taken of downturns in the economy.

\* Retrenchments should be on the principle of (Lifo). This means that the oldest workers who have worked the longest in the plant should be the last to be retrenched.

\* Severance pay should be paid to workers on the basis of a month's wages for each year worked.

As a result of these negotiations Sigma workers were retrenched only after two months

of deliberations and some jobs were saved as a result of union pressure.

In addition, it was agreed that the workers be retrenched on the "lifo" principle.

The severance pay agreed to was one month's pay for workers with between two and five years' service, and three months' pay for workers with over five years' service.

Also, retrenched workers will be given first choice when Sigma recruits again.

NAAWU's Sigma branch secretary, Mar-

tin Ndaba, has described the negotiations as a "mixed victory".

He said: "On the one hand we lost the retrenchment battle as 507 workers were retrenched. However, we were at least able to get them increased retrenchment benefits."

Mr Ndaba went on to point out the necessity of a union to negotiate a retrenchment procedure. At Datsun, 150 workers were retrenched. They received no severance pay and were not protected by the "Lifo" principle.

Management could simply dismiss older

workers whom they saw as unproductive. Datsun management gave as the reason for retrenchment the fact that too many workers returned to work after the holidays.

A union spokesman said the union rejected this explanation. "Datsun should have planned properly," he said.

"This shows that, in the absence of a strong union at Datsun management can do what they like with workers and give unacceptable reasons for doing it.

He called on all workers to join a union to prevent management decisions like this.

# Crossroads spirit has gone to sleep

"IN old Crossroads, we had people but no houses.

HERE in New Crossroads, we have houses but no people."

New Crossroads resident, Mrs D Mananga.

ON the dusty sands bordering Nyanga East, more than 900 houses have been built to accommodate some of the Crossroads families, who have struggled for decent housing for years.

The strength of those who struggled forced the authorities to start providing homes on a strip of land which today has become known as New Cross-

roads.

But the spirit of unity which strengthened them in fighting for these houses, has gone to sleep.

New Crossroad residents interviewed by Grassroots said that they no longer feel the close bonds with their neighbours as they had in old Crossroads.

"Here you must mind your own business," one resident said.

"I think this is so because some people have more than others," she said. "While we have houses now, there are no other facilities."

Many women complained that they cannot manage to survive on the low wages their husbands earn. They want work but there is nobody to look after our children. Not only are there no cre-

ches but no proper playgrounds for them," they said.

New Crossroad resident, Mrs D Mananga, has lived in the area for more than a year, had great hopes when she moved into her one-bedroomed home. "I thought things would be much better here," she said. "But we must face the fact that the standard of living is low. Our people must

understand that there is more to life than just having a house."

Mrs Mananga has not given up believing that something can be done to improve the situation.

"If people put their minds together, things will soon come to us. If we can put our feet together and stand for our rights, then there will be no delay."



## The price of rent increases



## Hout Bay residents stand united to form civic

MORE than 100 people attended the rent meeting on Wednesday night, March 24 at Sentinel School, Hout Bay. The meeting was called by the Block Club residents Committee.

Residents worked hard to inform people about the meeting. This was done by door to door contact and speaking through the loud hailer. Union Committees informed workers in the fish factories.

At the start songs were sung and Mr Bezuidenhout formally opened the meeting with prayer. The chairman, Mr Willoughby, introduced the speakers.

The first speaker, a South African Sea Products tenant gave a message of support to the Divisional Council tenants since SASP tenants are not directly affected by increases in rents but still stand by the tenants that are affected.

A further message of support was given by the youth. The speaker said that youth stand by their parents and grandparents in the struggle for rents they can afford. She said: "Often the youth are pulled out of school to help our parents to pay for basics like rents."

The speaker appealed to the community to stand united to form a democratic people's organization through which the people can channel their grievances and resist oppressive laws.

The guest speaker, Mr Wilfred Rhodes, chairperson of CAHAC spoke on housing in South Africa and on CAHAC.

A community worker in the area spoke on CAHAC's meeting with the minister of Community Development, Mr Pen Kotze. The meeting was then opened to the floor.

After residents had discussed their grievances related to high rents, one resident said: "It is no use sitting on the fence and shouting. Something must be done. We must come together and form an organization that will actively take up our problems and work under the wing of CAHAC."

The residents unanimously agreed with this statement and decided to elect a committee to organize a mass meeting where a new civic organization will be born.

Residents were elected onto this committee. Their task is to make all the arrangements for the mass

meeting and to inform the community about the meeting through house-meetings and pamphlets.

One of the residents on the committee commented, "I think it was a very successful meeting. This was something new to us and something we've been waiting for for a long time. "We must join up with CAHAC. It was through this organization that our grievances went forward to the Minister of Community Development.

"Now he knows how

we feel about the Group Areas, about not having enough facilities, about how we struggle to pay our rents and how we struggle to make ends meet. Now we also know how little he thinks about us."

Another resident had the following to say about the meeting. "It was a good start to what will be a long struggle. There will be opposition and we will have to work hard in drawing people into becoming active and committed to building our peoples' organisation."



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# ANGER AT EVICTION NOTICES

THE people of Avonwood, Avondale and Lyndoc have received eviction notices because they cannot afford to pay the latest rent increases.

At the monthly meeting of the Divisional Council last month the people aired their grievances in a silent protest.

### Banner

As the council sped through the agenda, the people stood up as one with the banner of their association and another banner stating the demand that rents be lowered and evictions stopped.

The chairman of the Council, Mr Louwtjie Rothman, asked the people to leave, which they did.

Outside the hall the people said they were

upset at the way in which the Council went through the agenda.

"It's amazing that they can discuss things that concern us so quick without considering how we feel," said one woman.

The people then took a letter with their demands to the office of the Council secretary, Mr Vivier.

They demanded that:

- the various due dates be changed to one date for all tenants - notably the seventh of each month;
- the interest charged on arrears be scrapped immediately;
- penalty rentals be lifted and provision be made for tenants to submit their blue forms;
- eviction notices be delivered personally to tenants;
- office hours at the

local rent offices be extended;

- rent forms should be computerised and not handwritten;
- an effective rent system must be developed;
- a full enquiry be launched into the books and inefficient administration of the local rent office;
- the system of two families in one house paying rents be scrapped immediately;
- clarity should be given on the paying of rents on a weekly and monthly basis;

and finally we unequivocally demand rents all tenants can afford.

The people of Elsie River have shown how they feel. Now they are waiting for the Council to reply to their letter.

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# Let workers join the union of their choice

THE Western Cape region of the Media Workers Association of South Africa (MWASA) decided at its first annual congress to work toward closer ties with all democratic trade unions.

To put this ideal into practice, the union decided to actively support the Cape Town Solidarity Committee of independent trade unions and also to urge other branches to support the committee in their regions.

The congress, held at the Lutheran centre in Athlone on March 13 and 14, was attended by representatives of other democratic unions, community organisations and members of the union.

Union officials were however disappointed at the small number of workers who attended the congress. This was in spite of the union having increased its membership from 40 to 500 in less than a year.

It was felt that too many workers did not fully understand that they formed the union and that their active support was essential.

Officials urged members to get involved in the union. As one official said: "No issue is too complicated for all the workers to discuss. Discussion must take place inside and outside meetings, at home and at work."

"Workers must realise that important policy decisions are taken at congress which decides the future of the union."

In his report, the outgoing chairman of the region said he was proud that "MWASA Western Cape has taken its place among democratic civic, community and

trade union organisations in the Western Cape."

He said the union had ensured democratic consultation with workers on all issues through the holding of monthly meetings and the referring of issues to workers for decisions.

The outgoing secretary reported that two petitions demanding the right of workers to join the union of their choice was being circulated at the Argus newspaper.

An important section dealt with the difficulties experienced in recognition negotiations with the management of Allied Publishing which refused to negotiate with MWASA for higher wages or better working con-

ditions.

Workers at Allied had decided to petition management to give in to their demands.

Features of the second day of congress were papers dealing with the union's community involvement, its relations with other unions and greater participation of ordinary members.

These papers were well received and were discussed at length, with the guest speakers answering questions from members.

Officials elected at the congress were Mr H Pick - chairman, Mr A Salie - secretary, Mr R Woolfe - treasurer, and Ms A Boonsaier - assistant secretary-treasurer.

The outgoing secretary re-

ported that two petitions demanding the right of workers to join the union of their choice was being circulated at the Argus newspaper.

This was because many workers are members of MWASA as well as being forced to belong to the South African Typographical Union (SATU) which has a closed shop agreement with Argus management.

In spite of this, Argus management was forced to call in MWASA officials to settle a two-hour strike by circulation workers, many of whom were also SATU members.

Describing the strike as a "significant development", the secretary reported that the union had forced management to submit to the workers demands and the strike was called off.

The organisers report dealt thoroughly with all aspects of the union and traced its development up to the present.

## BUYING CLUBS CAN CUT COSTS

ON the outskirts of the mission station, Genadendal, near Caledon, lie three villages where farm workers live.

The villages - Bosmansloof, Bereasville and Voorstekraal - have been in existence for more than 200 years but still there are no shops serving the community.

Faced with the high cost of living, people have in the last few years found it increasingly difficult to feed their families.

In response to this problem, a few Bosmansloof women, assisted by a community worker, decided to do their buying together.

Through discussing their plan with others, they managed to get together about 17 women to form a buying club. Not long afterwards, clubs were formed in Berea and Voorstekraal.

At present, the combined membership of the three clubs is more

than 200 households.

Members say that the three clubs have grown, because they proved to be a solution to the people's problems.

But it was the basic trust shared by the members that has ensured the success of the clubs, they say.

In an interview with the community worker in the area, GRASSROOTS learnt how these clubs were run.

She told us that all three clubs were run along the same lines.

"The members discuss which goods are needed. These are then



purchased in bulk at wholesalers in Cape Town and delivered to particular houses. The people then send in their orders and a small group is chosen to pack.

These orders can be collected on Friday night or Saturday morning while items required urgently can be obtained during the week at prescribed times.

To avoid congestion, people are asked to enter at the back door and leave through the

front door.

"At the present moment, the club is experiencing a problem because many workers are seasonal workers on the fruit and other farms. They therefore have to send in their orders early in the week and are not available to assist with packing.

### Discuss

But it is no longer essential to have meetings once a week because after nearly a year, we have a very good idea of the amount of goods we must order.

We therefore have meetings once a month where we discuss what goods to buy, what problems we have and other matters arising in the community.

At such a general meeting, a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, assistant secretary, cashier and other committee members are chosen. Their duty is to see to it that everything runs smoothly.

A Voorstekraal resident Mrs R J Edson, told GRASSROOTS how she became involved in the struggle

against attempts to stop the clubs from working.

"The problems started when the management board of Genadendal got to know about the clubs.

"They were not pleased and sent us a letter asking us to stop running the club until they could investigate the manner in which the club operated.

But we did not stop because we needed the club.

Instead, we together with the club in Bereasville sent an invitation to the management board to attend a combined meeting of the two clubs where the matter can be discussed. (Bereasville is even further from the shops - four miles.)

More than a hundred members gathered to wait for the board but not one board member arrived.

Later, the board invited the community worker to come and hold talks with them.

"He refused and instead went along with a numbers of other mem-

bers to put the case for the clubs. When the board said the clubs are not allowed, the people said they were going to continue.

Because the board saw that the people were determined, they had to agree that the clubs could continue to operate.

They said however that they would expect certain questions to be answered in writing. This was agreed upon and this was done but so far the promised written permission has not been received.

"In Voorstekraal, our club has been in operation for ten months now and we are happy to say that all but two of the households belong to the club," Mrs Edson said.

### Savings

The club means good savings on each item which is a great help financially. Another advantage is that even a four year old can be sent to fetch the goods without interference."

Long live the Voorstekraal Savings Club the residents say.

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## Why there is a transport problem

Bus fares are going up again. The National Transport Commission (NTC) — a government appointed body that considers application for increases in fares has given the go ahead to Mitchells Plain Bus Service Ltd and Atlantis Bus Service Ltd, to raise their fares. The last time strong opposition resulted in a victory for the people. This time the people's opposition has not given a positive result. This article examines the actual hearing and raises a few questions.

The National Transport Commission met on the 17th and 18th February to decide on the increases. Present there in the board room were the slick directors of the bus companies, ordinary people from the communities and the officials who made up the NTC.

What do we mean by the transport problem?

As more and more factories were built, people began to move to the towns. These people quite often made their homes near to their places of work. And since they lived to-

gether, and worked together, a strong unity was developing. The government felt threatened by this unity and also to keep the centre of the towns white, began to break up long established communities. The Group Areas Act and Urban Areas Act destroyed overnight the community spirit & unity that took years to build.

Over 300 000 people in the W. Cape were removed. Whereas previously they could walk to work, now they had the extra burden of huge transport costs.

Transport costs are also high because in all the areas in and around Cape Town, transport is provided by a single company — there is a monopoly.

Let us have a look at the various groups present in the boardroom. There were a large number of people from community and worker organizations. It is people from the communities who are forced to use the buses whether they like it or not. The spokesperson of this group mentioned the

Group Areas Act, their bad living conditions, the high rents, the high cost of living and the low wages — the conditions that make people angry. They mentioned too that transport is an essential service — like collecting garbage and should not be provided for profit! That many people cannot afford the present bus fares let along any increases.

Some of the big shareholders of the bus company were also there. Their lawyer argued that since they were not making enough profit they deserved an increase. It was not their concern that people have been moved to distant townships.

Sitting in front were the 4 member commission. They eventually decide whether we pay more bus fares or not — they do not use buses! Since they have been appointed by the government, one would expect them to be sympathetic to the policies of the government. And this was largely true.

They often interrupted spokespersons of the people to say "that is politics" and politics is not responsible for high bus fares! Also government departments work closely with bus owners. For example during the 1980 bus-boycott, Dept. of Transport inspectors forced people of "pirate" taxis and trucks and into the buses.

# Factreton anger

EXTRA rooms, garages and storerooms built by the people of Factreton long ago are being demolished by the City Council.

This has angered the people who decided at a recent mass meeting to send a delegation to see Council about the matter.

The meeting was attended by more than 200 people. Many people volunteered to help with a survey to find out more information about the problem.

In one week all of Factreton was surveyed by the volunteers. The matter was brought to the KFR & TA by a member who had been issued with a demolition



notice.

Several housemeetings were held and Council was invited to a meeting and asked to stop all further demolitions in the area.

Before the mass meeting the residents learnt from Council that all demolitions had been stopped until they

could reach an agreement with the people at a meeting.

At housemeetings people gave the following reasons for building the structures:

- The houses are too small and people need more sleeping-places;
- There is no storage space in the houses;

- The streets are too narrow and unsafe. People need to protect their cars;

- The kitchens are too small for families to have their meals.

Further meetings have been planned in the area to prepare people for the delegation to Council.

## 'Hands tied' says DIVCO

THE Belhar Civic Association last month sent a delegation to the Divisional Council to discuss problems in the area.

This was done after the civic had been actively involved in the rents campaign.

Belhar was one of the areas worst hit by rent increases. For this reason, the community generally responded well to the campaign as a whole and to the Day of Action in particular.

The hopes and expectations of the community were high when

the Cahac delegation discussed the rent issue with the Minister. His response together with the decline of the Rents Action Committee, spurred the association to see the Divisional Council.

A delegation of ten people handed a detailed memorandum to Divisional Council. But the response of this local administration was very similar to the response of Pen Kotze.

Despite this, the delegates felt they had discovered some useful things they otherwise would not have known.

Firstly, Divisional Council protested against the size of the delegation. They said it was highly irregular to see more than two representatives from an area.

They then refused to discuss the memorandum dealing with the rent increases and evictions in any detail.

The government was responsible for determining rents, they said. Divco did not make one penny profit on the houses they rented, they stressed.

"Our hands are tied. We depend on the go-

vernment for funds and can do absolutely nothing in areas," came the response when delegates asked questions about the lack of facilities in the area.

This was their answer to questions about poor medical facilities as well. They refused to take any responsibility for the problems experienced by residents.

They even ignored the point that the ash bricks were breeding places for bugs saying that the people themselves had brought the bugs to Belhar.

From page 1

## Bus fares — story behind increases

shareholders as a special dividend in March 1981.

(The rest was used to pay back a loan).

This meant that all the shareholders suddenly received a dividend that was bigger than the value of their shares.

Even Jan Pickard, one of the biggest and wealthiest shareholders in City Tramways, said that the payout had "not benefitted the company's image."

But the people who pay bus fares are not interested in "image".

For them it is a question of bread and butter. They know that the R48-million that was paid to the shareholders of Tollgate Holdings came out of their pockets.

Two months after this huge payout to the shareholders, Tollgate wanted to increase City Tramways fares again. It gave the same argument that it needed more money to buy new buses but this time nobody believed them.

When the National

Transport Commission saw how angry the people were about these dealings of Tollgate they decided it would be best to refuse the fare increase.

This year City Tramways have not applied for fare increases again. They have, however, been granted increases because of the petrol price increase.

But another bus company Associated Bus Holdings (ABH) half-owned by Tollgate, has applied and has

been granted increases ranging from 15% to 33%. ABH runs the bus service to Mitchells Plain and Atlantis.

At the hearing of the National Transport Commission in Cape Town recently, the lawyer acting for ABH said a 30% increase was necessary to meet rising costs.

"The problem is not profits, it is survival," he said.

An investigation into ABH has revealed the following facts:

Between 1977 and 1980 ABH made an average profit of 35% every year. (R350 000 after tax on an investment of R975 000). After the railway line to Mitchells Plain was opened in 1980 many people started using trains instead and ABH made a loss of R75 000.

Then ABH applied to the Department of Transport for enough money to put them back in the same position, making the same amount of profit as

they did before the railway line was opened. In the past the Department has always granted very generous compensation.

The money that the Government pays out in compensation comes from the taxpayer. That means that while people are paying their train fares, their tax money is being used to keep up the profits of a bus company even when people aren't using the buses.

These disclosures have angered people even more — particularly as the Board of Trade and Industries has laid down a guideline of 15% profit for companies that have a near-monopoly over goods and services they provide.

Tollgate Holdings has a near monopoly over all bus services in Cape Town and a captive market because people have to use buses. Yet companies belonging to Tollgate have shown profits of 35% to 60% in recent years.

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**COMMENTS**

# The rents struggle

UNJUST rent increases have been forced onto our people.

Through CAHAC, the co-ordinating civic body, the people have voiced their protest.

The Mitchells Plain rally attended by more than 3000 people, the petitions signed by 4000, and the placard demonstration on the Day of Action showed that our people are beginning to sit up.

Many have joined their organisation and made it possible for some action to be taken. However community organisations are still not strong enough to unite all residents in their areas.

The delegates of CAHAC have correctly resolved to go back to their areas and further strengthen themselves for the struggles that lie ahead.

This is not the last time that we will be faced with a rent increase. Despite our protest the government will without shame continue

to increase our hardships.

Many organisations were caught unawares when the rent increases were announced in December last year. At the initial CAHAC meeting on rents delegates had very little or no idea at all of how the rent structures were being applied in their area. It became clear that people were working in areas but had little understanding of the conditions of housing imposed by the local authority.

To avoid such problems in the future it is essential that people working in the communities should make it their duty to gain as complete and as thorough an understanding of the problems encountered by the people.

The time is now that we must build on the lessons learnt from the rents campaign.

## Our AGM

IT was resolved at the second annual congress of Grassroots that more attention be given to defeats suffered by our organisations. Grassroots, it was agreed, focusses mainly on the victories gained and as such fails to give people the insight they require to understand problems experienced in struggling for their rights.

This lesson from the congress needs to be applied not only to the newsletter of the community but also within organisations themselves. For too long now we have glorified our activities and ignored the mistakes and serious failures experienced. We must be able to say honestly and openly that we have difficulties in organising. Once we identify problems, the first step towards solving them will have been taken. No problem is too big to be solved by all of us together.

If a civic in one area is not making much progress, then we must all try and assist and see what can be done to improve the situation. While we each work in different areas or different trade unions, our struggle is the same. We must not allow artificial area divisions created by the state to keep us separate.

## Fake paper

IN 1980 when the people were angry about the big increases and busfares, the government issued pamphlets which tried to confuse the people. Now, two years later, when the people have been hit by rent increases and stood together to fight these increases, we find fake copies of a CAHAC newsletter being distributed.

This is a blatant attempt to fool the people and there are no prizes for guessing who's responsible.

However, the people cannot be fooled. If Cahac was an organisation that was not in touch with the people, dirty tricks like distributing fake newsletters could have succeeded.

The people will be more alert to those kind of tricks in future.



**LETTERS**

## We must organise

THE recent increases in busfares will add to the severe hardships already experienced by residents in Cape Town.

The increases have come at a time when rents have gone up all over the Western Cape, food prices have increased and the cost of living generally has shot up.

Just how are we going to survive?

The bus companies, Mitchells Plain and Atlantis and City Trams, who already make huge profits have once again put up their fares.

This comes about eight months after community organisations and trade unions successfully fought the bus companies application for increases.

Mitchells Plain and Atlantis bus companies were granted the increases by the National Transport Commission following a hearing which was held on the Foreshore.

At the hearing it was pointed out that an increase in busfares would result in 25 per-

cent of people in Atlantis having to live below the poverty line.

The National Transport Commission ignored this.

If the bus companies follow the pattern which they have been over the past few years, then it is likely they will make regular applications for increases.

The Council, because they do not worry about the problems of tenants, will probably also push up their rents annually.

Food, clothing and most other things will also probably increase.

As times become worse, it is becoming more and more important for us to organise ourselves.

Residents should all join their residents Association and workers their trade unions.

Let us not wait until our problems become so bad that we cannot cope with them. We need united action now.

Community worker

# Police took my calendar

Dear Sir,  
I am one of Grassroots' readers here in Bloemfontein. I bought a copy of the December paper with a calendar inside.

Surprisingly on Monday the 8th February the police went to my home and took my calendar which was placed against the wall.

They left me a message that if I want it I must go to their offices.

Before I could do so my friend whose calendar had also been taken brought me the message that they said they won't give the calendars and Grassroots back to us because they are banned.

So, we have decided to take action against them. But before we could do so, we want to know and have a proof that Grassroots is not

banned. And nobody can help us except you. So, please let us know whether it is banned or not.

Secondly I would be very happy if the very same case could be published in one of Grassroots' volumes.

Please let Grassroots extend its solidarity hand to us here in Bloemfontein.  
Yours in Africa

# Grassroots is NOT banned

Dear Sir,  
Thank you so much for your letter. We are very pleased that you wrote to us to let us know of your problem.

First of all, we would like to assure you that Grassroots is a legal newspaper and that nobody can stop you from reading it. However, only the calendar of the newspaper was banned. It is true that you may not distribute it. This

means that you cannot pass it on to another person to read, but that you may possess it. If you keep it where it is not displayed it is legal.

Grassroots has printed 18 issues over the past two years. So far, only the December calendar has been banned, all the other issues are NOT banned and you are legally entitled to have them.

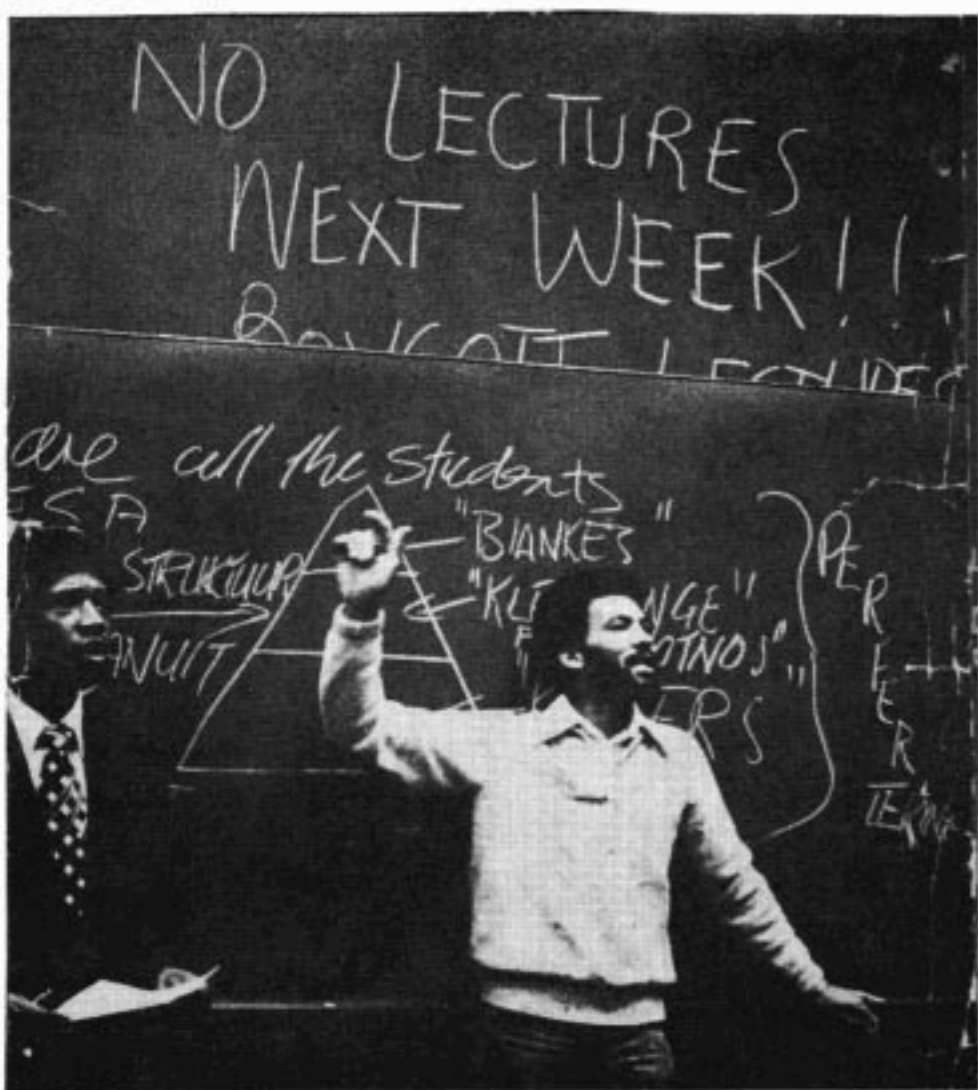
We are pleased to

hear that you like to read Grassroots and now that you know your rights, you will continue to do so. If you do not get it regularly, please let us know.

Thousands of people read Grassroots in Cape Town. We are sorry that you had so much trouble.

Thanking you,

Grassroots.



LAST month, an 11-person SRC was democratically elected by the students at the University of the Western Cape. It was not the first time that this campus saw an SRC election. The struggle for a democratic SRC began more than ten years ago.

The first protest started in 1970 when students refused to wear ties. In the same year, students rejected elections of an SRC because they believed that under the existing constitution, such a body would be powerless.

1972: In February 1972, the students had their first proper election for an SRC after drawing up their own constitution. However, a dispute arose between the rector and the SRC a few months later. The SRC was informed that it was no longer recognised, that its constitution was not legal. The administration handed it a new constitution which the student body

## UWC - The struggle continues

rejected.

The conflict around the SRC issue and other grievances led to a walk-off taking place in June 1973.

The authorities reacted by expelling the entire student body. The students could only be taken back if they signed a form undertaking to endorse all the regulations of the university authorities.

They refused to comply with this condition and called for the reinstatement of all the students.

What followed was the first attempt by the students to organise community support.

Meetings were held throughout the country culminating in a mass meeting in Athlone attended by 12 000 people who demanded un-

conditional readmission of every single student. The authorities gave in.

The fight for the acceptance of their own SRC constitution was continued.

1976 - The year 1976 speaks for itself. It all started with a one week boycott of classes in protest against the social and political situation in South Africa.

Once again the SRC constitution was suspended.

In 1977, SRC was elected but students did

not show much interest. In October a spirit of defiance developed after a mass meeting in honour of Steve Biko who had died in detention.

The SRC constitution was again withdrawn.

MOST communities in the Western Cape were affected by the education crisis that struck in 1980. The memories of the meetings, discussions, fears and happiness still linger on. In the future there will be more struggles taking place in the field of education. Perhaps we need to look more closely at this aspect of the life of our community. In this way we could prevent the mistakes and beware of the pitfalls of the past.

Because we don't have democratic control of our country we don't have democratic

control of the education of our children. The government controls the education of our youth. Below the government are the education departments and campus administrators. These decide what should be taught and how the teaching and learning should take place.

### Distribution

The government also distributes money for education in a very unfair way. In 1979 (just before the boycotts) the government spent R551,00 on every white child, R185,16 on every coloured, R236 on every Asian child and R54 on every Black child.

White children are taught skills of leadership and organisation so that they can take up positions of power and management. Black children are taught to be future workers.

The struggle for an SRC lapsed a bit until 1980 when a renewed call was made during the schools boycott of 1980.

An important feature of this boycott was the link set up between students and the community. Parent-student action committees were started in most areas.

1981 - A referendum was held at the beginning of the year. The majority of the students were in favour of an SRC being formed. An ad hoc committee was selected.

It held programmes to popularise and promote the idea of an SRC.

After an ill-timed boycott in June, a nine-person SRC came into being.

### 1982 AND THE ROAD AHEAD.

1982 started with the orientation programme. Students also showed their anger at the death of Dr Neil Aggett in detention by attending protest meetings and participating in the nationwide work stoppage.

However, the SRC gave too little attention to student grievances. It never really gained the full active support of the student body.

For any SRC to be successful it has to have mass student participation. In order to achieve this at Bush, issues which affect students directly will have to be tackled. Examples are high class fees, high hostel fees, etc. Sub-committees have to be established so as to incorporate students in the investigation of these problems.

The road ahead will be filled with stumbling blocks and it is only through the support and active participation of the student mass that we will be successful in building a strong SRC.

They are given no specialised education. This means that the education of our youth does not serve the needs of the people but of the government.

• Have our youth accepted this?

From 1920 to 1954 to 1976 till 1980 students have challenged the fairness of the education which they receive. No matter what kind the challenge, be it militant boycotts or quietly building SRCs, the link between the student struggles and that of the broader community was always clear.

In many of the student struggles there have been some victories but there have also been losses. In 1976 the Government hit back with terrible force. Lots of students were killed and organisations were banned.

What can we learn

from our actions in 1976 and 1980?

• It is impossible to plan mass student action in advance. We cannot say that next year at such and such a date we will start a boycott lasting so many days. This is impossible. Apartheid and inferior education create pressures in schools and university which build up to the point where any event, a death in detention or a worker strike, can spark off mass action. However,

### Organisation

the success of this mass action depends on how much organisation went before it. At schools there should be a democratic SRC which builds strong unity among the students. When a school like this embarks on some form of mass action the chance of effective united mass action is greater.

# Students speak out about SRC's

## The school is a community

BECAUSE there are many different people who form part of it, it has many different problems. One of the ways for students to handle their difficulties is to elect a SRC (Students' Representative Council).

SRCs have played an important role in our community, especially in the last two years, when many SRCs were formed. Grassroots spoke to students from a number of different schools, where no SRCs exist, or where SRCs exist but are not very effective, and also where they operate effectively.

This brought forward many interesting views which we hope will stimulate debate.

\* It should provide 'a link between staff and students'.

\* An SRC should keep students informed about what is happening in the community.

\* An SRC 'should listen to people's complaints about school as far as possible. It should act on those complaints.'

\* SRCs should organise discussions.

One student felt that the individuals on the SRC at his school were too busy arranging sporting activities.

He said it was sad that SRCs were 'not organising discussions on subjects like the role of formal education in our society, what our attitude to boycotts should be, and so on. They need to explain why certain things should or should not be done'.

A student from a school where no SRC exists: 'There is no discussion at our school. We haven't got an SRC. The students didn't want an SRC.'

She felt that her school was lacking something because it had no SRC. There was no unity amongst the students and no communication with the staff.

'They should find out what people want to know and take it

from there. Class representatives know their classes and can easily find out what people are thinking.'

One student felt that teachers, outsiders as well as students could lead discussions. 'Anyone who is prepared to, or knows enough, can help.'

Another student felt that the SRC should conduct awareness programmes on a regular basis. Time should be made available for this in the classrooms.

### ARE BOYCOTTS STILL IN THE MINDS OF STUDENTS?

'Yes. Most felt that it had been a good thing. But some are disillusioned because their demands had not been met. They think that there should be another way. They don't know what it is.'

Some feel that because many demands were not met, the boycott was not a good thing. The SRCs should take up this discussion, so that the whole matter can be cleared up.'

Another student said that there was no discussion of this matter at her school. 'The boycotts don't seem to have affected them much.'

It is obvious that much more can be said about relationships in schools, especially about relationships between students, between students and other people like teachers in schools and also between schools and the community.

One student said that there needs to be better communication between student organisations and the community organisations. It was suggested that students be represented in community organisations. What do you think about this?

If you would like to join a discussion group about this and other questions about relationships in a school, please phone or write to Grassroots.

## UKUSA forms links

MORE than 100 delegates from 50 community and worker organisations in and around Durban attended the Ukusa congress over the weekend.

The congress was considered to be a milestone in the dynamic growth and development of the newspaper which was started just more than a year ago. A delegate at the congress said, "we call on all organisations to throw their weight behind the initiative and to help build Ukusa to be the voice of the silent majority."

The congress was opened by a member of the Ukusa Board, Dr Gangat. He outlined the problems of the newspaper over the past year. Some of which are a poor distribution network, irregular publication of the newspaper and a lack of community involvement in deciding on the content of the paper. Dr Gangat said,

"Ukusa was started to fill a vacuum in the media field. There is very little coverage of the problems and struggles of our people in the daily commercial newspapers. Ukusa must fill this void, it must also inform and educate our people."

A second speaker, Adv. Zak Yakoob, talked about the role of alternative media in our struggle for democratic change.

He stressed that for a newspaper to fall within the field of alternative media, it must serve to propagate democratic ideals as opposed to Apartheid. It must not only unite our people, but be democratic in its organisation.

A guest speaker from Grassroots Community Newspaper presented a model of how an alternative newspaper is operating in Cape Town.

The afternoon session was by far the

most interesting as delegates debated issues rigorously in the small group discussion. They gave their feedback on what the role of Ukusa should be and how community and worker organisations could participate in the news-gathering process, distribution, and advertising. An important question was how Ukusa should be structured, what kinds of sub-committees are needed and what should the relationship be between the Board of Ukusa and the people.

Arising from the group discussions, proposals were formulated on the future of Ukusa and the way forward.

The spirit of the congress was constructive. Adv. Zak Yakoob summarised the mood of the congress quite aptly when he said, "Ukusa has the will. It now needs the support of all democratic people's organisations to play its part in shaping the future of the project."



IT'S no fun being a child these days if you have to play in a two roomed house all day, with fifty or more children of different ages while your mother goes to work. Houses crammed with little children is a common sight in our communities today. Why this sudden need for crèches, nursery schools and day and play centres? What has given rise to the problem?

Previously fathers were bread-winners. Mothers stayed at home to care for and bring up children. With the rising costs of rent, electricity, transport and food, families can no longer manage to make ends meet.

**Neighbour**

More and more mothers are forced to work to help earn the money necessary to live. And so the few women who remain at home obliged by caring for these children who are not old enough to go to school.

Unfortunately very often the neighbour cannot cope with the amount of children left with her. She has to be mother to every child in her care. She must do what the mother would have done, teach the child a language so that he can see what he wants and knows the names of things, to be potty trained, to eat correctly and play and mix with other children.

**Important**

It is a task of such importance in fact the early learning years of a child are the most important years. If a child is taught many words he can build on more and more as he gets older. If he is taught to play fair when he is young, he will deal fair when he is older. Under the present conditions the task is hopeless.

Surely it is not the fault of the neighbour who is only helping out in a difficult situation. It is not the mothers' fault who has to work. Who then is responsible for the pre-school child?

The mother works for bosses, who make all the profit from her work. They should provide facilities

for children of the mothers who work for them.

Although inadequately in some communities, the state makes provision for the six year old in the primary school. Bigger children go to the high schools, colleges and universities.

Why is the pre-school child not cared for by the state? The pre-school child has a right and a need as well. Of all the thousands and thousands of children in our communities, the health department has only 8 crèches which serve 532 children and the housing department has 21 crèches which serve 2 356 children.

Even when communities attempt to try and establish a crèche the task seems impossible because of the red tape, rules and regulations with which they have to comply.

**Share**

For example the health department demands that there should be 1 wash basin for every 10 children, if they are 'coloured'. You need 1 wash basin to every 12 children if they happen to be 'indian'. The demands are ridiculous. The facilities provided are inadequate.

What there should be are crèches for babies and toddlers. There should be day care and play centres for children of 3 and 4 years, where they learn to play and mix, where they learn to play and mix.

There should be pre-schools for children of 5 years who should be made ready and prepared for primary school when they are six.

**Great**

There needs to be people who the state has trained to mind these children of different stages. These should be buildings, equipment and facilities to be used.

We see that children are many. The needs are great. What is provided is poor and inadequate.

Since the problem falls back into the hands of the community what can be done about it?

# Teaching children to work together

PROVIDING child-care facilities is an important way to mobilize parents. But child-care is also important in another way.

Our children are the future youth and community leaders. Child-care allows us to start educating our children from a young age.

In Thailand, for example, children take turns to serve cool-drink and a firm the big children who teach the little ones songs. In this way, children learn to be aware of, and to help one another learn.

Competitive games where the biggest or highest children win are discouraged. For instance, musical chairs where children fight to get a chair is transformed into a Swagame where only chairs and not children are "out" — so at the end all the children are struggling to hold everyone as one chair!

Working together is demonstrated by simple games — getting children to try to lift a large rock by themselves and then going all to lift the rock together.

Child-care in overcrowded conditions so they are aware from a very early age of the worries of parents — what happens when daddy gets sacked,

when the Group evicts the family, how daddy shouts when he's had a bad day at work and supper is not ready.

Instead of pretending that these are things that children should not know about, Thadani tries to get children to understand these problems and to ask why they happen and how they can be changed.

Children are asked to act out these situations and then to act out how they would like things to be. They talk about how things can change. In this way education is about life, about their community, the workplace and the many situations where real people live and struggle.

In this way too they are creatively thinking about what is possible and how it can be achieved.

Child-care will only mean if they enjoy what they're doing so fun is important. Advertis

# Solving the creche crisis

ON a Saturday in February twenty mothers from the town of Genadendal met to tackle a common problem of organising a day care centre for their pre-school children.

Genadendal is a community near Capetown. Since there is no work in the town, residents seek work on the apple, peach and tobacco farms in the surrounding farm district.

This means that mothers and fathers have to leave early in the morning and arrive back late at night.

A day centre had already been established, aided by the local church. But this proved inadequate since it was already full, and being centrally situated, was out of the reach of mothers of outlying areas.

What was needed firstly was a venue. The mothers sent a delegation to the church minister in Greyton, who allowed them to use a double classroom of the church school.

This venue was suitably accessible to the mothers who most needed a crèche.

The second step was to find two or three people who would care for the children at the crèche.

It was discovered that two young women from the community were unemployed and also were interested in caring for young children.

It was agreed that they would work on a voluntary basis until such time that the crèche organisation

could pay them. In the meantime they would be sponsored by the church members to attend the Athlone Early Learning Centre on the Monday of each week. What they learn in theory would be put into practice at the Greyton crèche.

Two other mothers agreed to stand in for them on these days.

Since the crèche needed money to operate it was decided that each mother pay R2 per week for each child. It was unanimously agreed upon by the meeting that if a mother could not afford R2, she could make up by donating to the crèche whatever she had like vegetables, fruit or flour.

Under no circumstances would a child be turned away because

the mother did not have R2.

The problem of equipment was soon overcome. Mothers donated whatever they could spare and which they thought the crèche would need.

One mother had bits of material, which another mother agreed to stitch, with which another mother agreed to cover two foam mattresses, which two other mothers had donated. Empty cartons and old toys were gathered from people in the community.

The crèche was to open on the Monday. It was decided that the children would receive porridge in the morning, a slice of bread for tea and a cooked meal of vegetables and cheap protein, like tinned fish or frikkadels or stew from

cheap meat cuts.

One mother agreed to prepare the cooked meal for that week. Each mother would have a turn to perform this chore the meeting decided.

**Donations**

The R2 would cover the food costs. As this had not been paid, donations of bread, pumpkins and milk were made to ensure that the crèche would kick off to a good start.

The Greyton Spoor Sentrum had been established. But what was a crèche without children?

Most mothers leave at 5 or 6 in the morning to be at their places of work and the children could not be expected to get up so early.

It was agreed upon that one mother who



**Creche should not be used as dumping ground**

WHEN the first 500 families moved into Woodlands in 1978 the newly formed residents association did a survey in the area which showed that the main need was a crèche.

They applied for two classrooms at the high school which they got and the parents of the children came together to run functions for funds to buy furniture.

Special workshops at which toys and musical instruments were made were run by the parents.

They elected an executive to control the crèche's activities.

However, all major decisions are made by the general body of parents, who feel that the crèche should not be used as a dumping ground by the parents who lack concern for their children.

That is why any parent who raises those general meetings in a row is asked to take her child out of the crèche.

Family days are held so that mothers can get to know each other better and also get to know their children's friends at the crèche.

When parents are on leave they come in to assist, often relieving staff so that they can attend workshops of their own. It is not only mothers who do this, but fathers as well.

Activities in the crèche place the accent on sharing and caring.

Older children are taught to help the younger ones which also helps develop a sense of responsibility.

Children are not allowed to bring their own toys. They have to share the common toys of the crèche.

Every effort is made to prevent racial prejudices from taking hold. For instance the song "Ba, Ba, Black Sheep" is banned because of its racial overtones.

The crèche has been lucky to get a special long-playing record with songs that encourage them to develop healthy values. One out on the LP tells the children not to stare at others because of "flat noses and funny hair".

Another cut is about the importance of sharing. The children love to sing the songs on the record.

Recently when one of the crèche children was knocked down by a car, the children staged a placard demonstration at the funeral.

The parents and staff run the annual party for the elderly people in the suburb.

# Starting projects

IN most areas where there are a few crèches, they are packed full of children and overcrowded. The long waiting lists give almost no hope to working parents who urgently need their children looked after daily.

As there is little chance of getting their children into a crèche, some mothers have taken this problem into their own hands. They look after their children at home. They also care for the children of two or three other families in their street.

The laws around child care allow a person to look after one to six children.

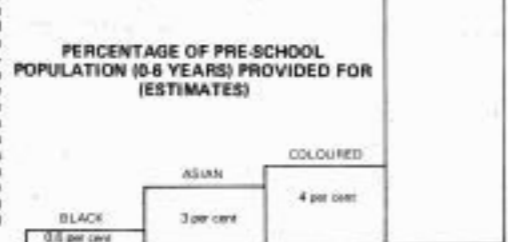
Some civic and women's organisations are considering starting

A HOUSEWIFE in Mitchell's Plain who helps out by taking care of the children of working mothers explained how she felt about the overcrowding problem.

"Ek lyk na 20 kinders na die ouersdom van 13 tot 5 jaar. Die ma's bring die kinders van 7 uur na koes taal kalle vir die laaste om 7 uur die aand. Om alken na 20 klein kinders te lyk is net nika grasj. Een van die grootste probleme is die klein kinders en feitlik geen tuis huise nie. Dit is regtig overvol met ons weet dat huiseplek van ons 'n groot probleem het met kinders."

We are all aware of the need for pre-school and day centres for the children of working mothers.

# SHOCKING PROVISION



is hard for a crèche to be successful if they are run in small houses or rooms adapted for the purpose, as a woman who runs the Mitchell's Plain crèche has stated. A survey of 1980 clearly shows how inadequately the pre-school child has been catered for.

# Health hazards of overcrowding

OVERCROWDING in crèches can lead to health problems. Johnny Jacobs goes to a crèche where there are 50 children in one small house.

His mother was forced to go back to work one year ago because the family could not manage — his father had low wages.

Johnny, aged two, has been sick many times since then. He has had diarrhoea (nausea stomach) twice. He always has a runny nose and was admitted to Red Cross Hospital last winter with tonsillitis and bad coughs.

GRASSROOTS spoke to a community

nurse who explained the health problems of overcrowding. She said that many sicknesses are spread from one child to another.

Diarrhoea is caused by germs which are found in the stool (shit) of a child who has the sickness. These germs can be passed on to a healthy child. This can happen when the sick child does not wash his hands after his last bowel movement.

He may then play with a toy and the germs are transferred to the toy. A well child who puts the toy in his mouth will swallow the germs and get diarrhoea.

Worms are also spread by very small eggs in the stool of a child who has worms, being swallowed by another child who plays with the same toys.

It is very difficult for a crèche supervisor to check that children wash their hands every time they go to the toilet where there are so many children.

All these illnesses are made much worse when children are eating poor food and are underweight.

Miss Kaba, the supervisor at Johnny's crèche, says very hard to prevent illness. She gives them good food like brown bread and peanut butter, bean stews and milk and eggs when there is enough money to buy them.

The place where the food is prepared is very close. All the food is covered to keep flies out. The food is freshly prepared every day because there is no fridge or freezer.

Thadani's Playgroup believes children can start learning different lessons. They can learn how to respect one another, to know that things can be changed but only if everyone works together.

This is done in many ways, and it is not only what you teach but how you teach that is important.

Johnny's mother says "It would be much easier if there was a crèche at the factory where I work."







## Starting projects

IN most areas where there are a few creches, they are packed full of children and overcrowded. The long waiting lists give almost no hope to working parents who urgently need their children looked after daily.

As there is little chance of getting their children into a creche, some mothers have taken this problem into their own hands. They look after their children at home. They also care for the children of two or three other families in their street.

The laws around child care allow a person to look after one to six children. Some civic and women's organisations are considering starting

their own child rearing projects.

These mothers who are at home, and who are interested in the education of young children can share caring for the children of their community.

At present there is no organisation who offers training for child minders or educational progress for the children.

The Early Learning Resource Unit in Athlone said: "We are interested in making contact with people who are caring for pre-school children in their own homes so that we can develop a course suitable for the needs of young children".



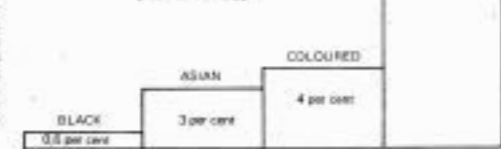
A HOUSEWIFE in Mitchells Plain who helps out by taking care of the children of working mothers explained how she felt about the overcrowding problem.

"Ek lyk na 20 kinders na die omdorren van 11 tot 5 jaar. Die ma's bring die kinders van 7 uur na koes taal kalle vir die laaste om 7 uur die aand. Om alken na 20 klein kinders te lyk is net rika gras. Die van die grootse probleme is die klein kinders en feitlik geen tuis koes nie. Dit is regtig overvol en ons weet dat hoesie plek van ons 'n groot probleem het met koes."

We are all aware of the need for pre-school and day centres for the children of working mothers. It

## SHOCKING PROVISION

PERCENTAGE OF PRE-SCHOOL POPULATION (0-6 YEARS) PROVIDED FOR (ESTIMATES)



is hard for a creche to be successful if they are run in small houses or rooms adapted for the purpose, as a woman who runs the Mitchells Plain creche has stated. A survey of 1980 clearly shows how inadequately the pre-school child has been catered for.

## Health hazards of overcrowding

OVERCROWDING in creches can lead to health problems. Johnny Jacobs goes to a creche where there are 50 children in one small house.

His mother was forced to go back to work one year ago because the family could not manage - his last husband's low wages.

Johnny, aged two, has been sick many times since then. He has had diarrhoea (nausea stomach) twice. He always has a nasty nose and was admitted to Red Cross Hospital last winter with tonsillitis and bad coughs.

GRASSROOTS spoke to a community

nurse who explained the health problems of overcrowding. She said that many sicknesses are spread from one child to another.

Diarrhoea is caused by germs which are found in the stool (shit) of a child who has the sickness. These germs can be passed on to a healthy child. This can happen when the sick child does not wash his hands after his last bowel movement.

He may then play with a toy and the germs are transferred to the toy. A well child who puts the toy in his mouth will swallow the germs and get diarrhoea. Women are also

spread by very small eggs in the stool of a child who has worms, being swallowed by another child who plays with the same toys.

It is very difficult for a creche supervisor to check that children wash their hands every time they go to the toilet when there are so many children. All these illnesses are made much worse when children are eating poor food and are underweight.

Miss Kaba, the supervisor at Johnny's creche, says very hard to prevent illness. She gives them good food like brown bread and peanut butter, bean stews

and milk and eggs when there is enough money to buy them.

The place where the food is prepared is very clean. All the food is covered to keep flies out. The food is freshly prepared every day because there is no fridge or freezer.

Johnny's mother says "It would be much easier if there was a creche at the factory where I work."

IT'S no fun being a child these days if you have to play in a two roomed house all day, with fifty or more children of different ages while your mother goes to work. Houses crammed with little children is a common sight in our communities today. Why this sudden need for creches, nursery schools and day and play centres? What has given rise to the problem?

Previously fathers were breadwinners. Mothers stayed at home to care for and bring up children. With the rising costs of rent, electricity, transport and food, families can no longer manage to make ends meet.

### Neighbour

More and more mothers are forced to work to help earn the money necessary to live. And so the few women who remain at home oblige by caring for these children who are not old enough to go to school.

Unfortunately very often the neighbour cannot cope with the amount of children left with her. She has to be mother to every child in her care. She must do what the mother would have done, teach the child a language so that he can see what he wants and knows the names of things, to be potty trained, to eat correctly and play and mix with other children.

### Important

It is a task of such importance in fact the early learning years of a child are the most important years. If a child is taught many words he can build on more and more as he gets older. If he is taught to play fair when he is young, he will deal fair when he is older. Under the present conditions the task is hopeless.

Surely it is not the fault of the neighbour who is only helping out in a difficult situation. It is not the mother's fault who has to work. Who then is responsible for the pre-school child?

The mother works for bosses, who make all the profit from her work. They should provide facilities

## Teaching children to work together

PROVIDING child-care facilities is an important way to mobilize parents. But child-care is also important in another way. Our children are the future youth and community leaders. Child-care allows us to start educating our children from a young age.

In schools, on TV, at the movies children learn many things - that to get somewhere in life you have to fight for yourself, that society can always be unequal and will always be so.

Thandazeni Phlego says children can start learning different lessons. They can learn how to respect one another, to know that things can be changed but only if everyone works together.

This is done in many ways, and it is not only what you teach but how you teach that is important.

for children of the mothers who work for them.

Although inadequately in some communities, the state makes provision for the six year old in the primary school. Bigger children go to the high schools, colleges and universities.

Why is the pre-school child not catered for by the state? The pre-school child has a right and a need as well. Of all the thousands and thousands of children in our communities, the health department has only 8 creches which serve 532 children and the housing department has 21 creches which serve 2 356 children.

Even when communities attempt to try and establish a creche the task seems impossible because of the red tape, rules and regulations with which they have to comply.

### Share

For example the health department demands that there should be 1 wash basin for every 10 children, if they are 'coloured'. You need 1 wash basin to every 12 children if they happen to be 'indian'. The demands are ridiculous. The facilities provided are inadequate.

What there should be are creches for babies and toddlers. There should be day care and play centres for children of 3 and 4 years, where they learn to play and mix, share and play fairly with one another.

There should be pre-schools for children of 5 years who should be made ready and prepared for primary school when they are six.

### Great

There needs to be people who the state has trained to mind these children of different stages. These should be buildings, equipment and facilities to be used.

We see that children are many. The needs are great. What is provided is poor and inadequate.

Since the problem falls back into the hands of the community what can be done about it?

# Solving the creche crisis

ON a Saturday in February twenty mothers from the town of Genadendal met to tackle a common problem of organising a day care centre for their pre-school children.

Genadendal is a community near Caledon. Since there is no work in the town, residents seek work on the apple, peach and tobacco farms in the surrounding farm district.

This means that mothers and fathers have to leave early in the morning and arrive back late at night.

A day centre had already been established, aided by the local church. But this proved inadequate since it was already full, and being centrally situated, was out of the reach of mothers of outlying areas.

### Voluntary

It was agreed that they would work on a voluntary basis until such time that the creche organisation

could pay them. In the meantime they would be sponsored by the church members to attend the Athlone Early Learning Centre on the Monday of each week. What they learn in theory would be put into practice at the Genadendal creche.

Two other mothers agreed to stand in for them on these days. Since the creche needed money to operate it was decided that each mother pay R2 per week for each child. It was unanimously agreed upon by the meeting that if a mother could not afford R2, she could make up by donating to the creche whatever she had like vegetables, fruit or flour.

Under no circumstances would a child be turned away because

the mother did not have R2. The problem of equipment was soon overcome. Mothers donated whatever they could spare and which they thought the creche would need.

One mother had bits of material, which another mother agreed to stitch, with which another mother agreed to cover two foam mattresses, which two other mothers had donated. Empty cartons and old toys were gathered from people in the community.

The creche was to open on the Monday. It was decided that the children would receive porridge in the morning, a slice of bread for tea and a cooked meal of vegetables and cheap protein, like tinned fish or frikkadels or stew from

cheap meat cuts. One mother agreed to prepare the cooked meal for that week.

Each mother would have a turn to perform this chore the meeting decided.

The R2 would cover the food costs. As this had not been paid, donations of bread, pumpkins and milk were made to ensure that the creche would kick off to a good start.

The Genadendal Spoor Sentrum had been established. But what was a creche without children?

Most mothers leave at 5 or 6 in the morning to be at their places of work and the children could not be expected to get up so early.

It was agreed upon that one mother who

did not work and who conveniently stayed at the farmstead point from the creche, would walk from her house collecting the children from certain points on route.

In the afternoon the creche teachers would deposit the children at their home on the way back.

Finally a committee was chosen from the members. Meetings would be held regularly to ensure the full participation of all members in the decision making and the functioning of the creche.

The mothers of Genadendal show that by standing together, co-operating and organising, community problems can be tackled. The creche has been operating strongly for two months now.



WHEN the first 500 families moved into Woodlands in 1978 the newly formed residents association did a survey in the area which showed that the main need was a creche.

They applied for two classrooms at the high school which they got and the parents of the children came together to run functions for funds to buy furniture.

Special workshops at which toys and musical instruments were made were run by the parents. They elected an executive to control the creche's activities.

## Creche should not be used as dumping ground

However, all major decisions are made by the general body of parents, who feel that the creche should not be used as a dumping ground by the parents who lack concern for their children.

Activities in the creche place the accent on sharing and caring. Older children are taught to help the younger ones which also helps develop a sense of responsibility.

Children are not allowed to bring their own toys. They have to share the common toys of the creche.

Every effort is made to prevent racial prejudices from taking hold. For instance the song "Ba, Ba, Black Sheep" is banned because of its racial overtones.

The creche has been lucky to get a special long-playing record with songs that encourage them to develop healthy values. One out on the LP tells the children not to stare at others because of "flat noses and funny hair".

Another cut is about the importance of sharing. The children love to sing the songs on the record.

Recently when one of the creche children was knocked down by a car, the children staged a placard demonstration at the funeral.

The parents and staff run the annual party for the elderly people in the suburb.

When parents are on leave they come in to assist, often relieving staff so that they can attend workshops of their own. It is not only mothers who do this, but fathers as well.



# 'Kill me or let me stay here'

**MAYFORD JIKOLO** (not his real name) was born in Cape Town, as was his father.

But he was sent to the Butterworth (now in the Transkei) for his high school education.

Apparently, it was this "sin" that cost him his right to live and work in Cape Town.

However he joined the ranks of the "illegals" — those who do not have proper documents (passes) and who are believed to number nearly half of the African population in the Western Cape — and managed to find work.

Accommodation was always a problem and last year he and his wife and three small children ended up squatting in the bush between Nyanga and Crossroads.

This was on July 16.

At dawn on August 19, police descended on the camp and carted more than 1 000 people off to Pollsmoor. From there they were sent to the Transkei in buses in terms of the Illegal Immigration Act which provides for deportation without legal defence.

Hundreds who had

escaped arrest sheltered at the Holy Cross Church in Nyanga. They were arrested there on August 26 and 349 illegals deported.

Mayford was among the first batch to be deported.

The deportees sheltered in church halls in Umtata.

The Transkei actively assisted those who wanted to return to Cape Town to do so. This was futile as roadblocks had been set up throughout the Southern and Eastern Cape. 2 523 people were intercepted at these roadblocks and sent back to the Transkei.

## Desperate

Mayford was desperate as he had been separated from his wife and three small children.

Eventually he managed to make his way back and arrived in Cape Town on October 8.

Immediately he started to search frantically for his wife and children.

He found his children with a cousin at Crossroads, but no sign of his wife. He checked the prisons, police, and even the morgue.

On November 10 he went to the Bantu Commissioner's office in Langa to ask for permission to stay in Cape Town and also a permit to seek work.

An official (whom he named) said that the only advice he could give him was to remain in the bush.

The next day the first of a series of police raids began and a number of squatters were arrested and deported.

On January 26 during one of the raids the police opened fire and Mayford was wounded in the shoulder. He was taken to hospital under police guard and

later charged with public violence and released on bail.

Early in March the squatters who had returned from the Transkei split in two groups — one deciding to move into St. George's Cathedral and go on a hunger strike while the other half decided to remain in the bush.

The split has its origins in the events of August last year when so many of them were deported.

Members of the existing bush committee at the time were not among those rounded up by the police as they remained behind.

In Umtata the deportees elected a new committee, most of whose members were among those who managed to return to Cape Town.

The bush people split into two groups around the two committees with two different strategies.

Both groups, however, are insisting they will die before they agree to go back to the Transkei.

As Mayford put his position: "They have already shot me once.

"Now they can either kill me or give me my right to stay and work in Cape Town."



# Squatters challenge system

THE action of the 54 squatters who fasted in St. George's Cathedral captured the attention of many. They represented the suffering and plight of thousands of other squatters.

Because there is no work or food in the rural areas, people are forced to seek work in the cities. The government makes lots of money from taxes it takes from the profits made by big businesses. To make big profits big businesses need lots of workers to work cheaply. So it follows that the government and the bosses need the people from the rural areas but they are required to work only. The government does not want to be responsible for them in any way.

Migrant workers are made use of as cheap labour. As migrant workers they have no rights. The workers fear being sent back to the poverty of the homelands if they show dissatisfaction and so the bosses are able to exploit as they please. Under the contract system the bosses do not have to provide any of the

usual fringe benefits like medical aid and sick pay. While they are in the cities the government refuses to cater for their basic human needs. Men have to leave their wives and families at home. No proper housing is provided.

The pass laws were introduced so that the government is able to control the amount of workers entering the urban areas. People from the homeland are only allowed to work in the cities. When their contracts end they must return. They are only allowed to work on a temporary basis and must renew the contract every year.

The reason why the Government is hostile towards the squatters is because they challenge the system.

They insist that they are not foreign workers. They say they are South African like all others born here and have a right to live and work here. They want this right legalised.

Big businesses and the government will not do this. They fear they will lose their grip. They fear that if the workers were allowed to stay in the cities permanently, they would organise themselves into trade unions. They would organise for something better than a starvation wage, something better than a cement bed in a crowded single-sex hostel room, something better than an insecure job that can last not longer than 12 months.

The 54 squatters demonstrate that social conditions are poor, wages are low, migrant workers are exploited and bosses are unfair but they rather remain here than face the hardships and starvation of the homelands.

# TRAIN FARES UP AS SERVICE WORSENS

FROM the beginning of this month people have to pay 15% more to travel to work by train — a journey that is becoming a daily hazard for thousands.

Trains have become so overcrowded and the service so bad that many people fear for their safety when travelling during peak hours.

During the morning and evening rush some commuters even sit on the carriage roofs if they cannot squeeze inside the doors.

Of those lucky enough to get in, some lie curled up in the luggage racks, stand in the toilets or straddle the

joints of the carriages to get a place.

People have to get in and out of windows because it is impossible to push to the doors through the crush. People have to keep the sliding doors forced open during the journey so that additional passengers can squeeze inside — leaving their arms and legs dangling outside. The chaos on trains has made it easier for thieves and thugs to operate, and many commuters have been robbed while travelling and from work.

The situation has worsened in recent months, particularly on

the "Resettlement line" as hundreds of residents have moved into new suburbs along the route, particularly in Mitchells Plain, where Beacon Valley, Tafelsig and Eastridge were recently opened.

They also use the overcrowded trains — and no new service has been added.

As the service deteriorates, and more and more people use the trains, so the fares go up.

The increases are imposed by the Government that runs the South African Railways (unlike the bus service that is run by a private

company.)

People say the Government should make enough money available for the train service to keep the fares down because it is Government policy that forces people to live so far out of town and makes them dependent on public transport.

This increase comes shortly after the Railways ended the cheap "return ticket" system.

Now, if people want to travel to town and back, they have to buy two single tickets which costs almost twice as much as the old return tickets.

This affects people who travel to town or Mitchells Plain's "town centre" at irregular intervals to do shopping. They have to pay almost double for their transport.

Announcing the latest increases during the Railways budget in Parliament, the Minister of Transport, Mr Hendrik Schoeman, said transport services operated at a loss of R71,9-million.

In an interview he said that 80 percent of the losses on the Railways were suffered by the daily passenger services taking people to and from work. These

services were subsidised by R690-million a year, he said. A 15% increase was not a lot when compared to an average of 17,5% increase in wages and salaries.

However, community spokesmen have rejected the Minister's statement. They say if the Government insists on the Group Areas Act it must be prepared to pay enough money in subsidies to keep down train fares. They are also particularly annoyed that they have to pay increased fares when National servicemen have just been granted half-price fares on all first and second

class journeys by mainline trains.

"We cannot accept that we have to pay increased fares so that soldiers can travel half price," a person who travels to work by train every day, said.

People are also demanding an improved service — especially in the light of increased fares.

Mr Schoeman said that by the end of the year he hoped platforms would be extended so that trains could be increased from 11 to 13 carriages. The Railways also hoped to increase the service by an additional four trains at peak hours.

## ADVICE

# Starting an organisation



TO start an Organisation there must be a need to organise. The need to organise arises when a Community is required to take concerted action. A community can organise around a specific issue like the rent increases, bus fare increases or around a general need like civics.

A Community can have a variety of organisations to represent its various interests; such as politics, civics, sports, education etc. It is important that the Com-

munity speaks with one voice; that individuals without a mandate do not claim to speak on behalf of the Community; that individuals do not make demands except through their organisations.

The need for an organisation can be established at a meeting of the Community where a specific issue is discussed. The meeting elects a committee to prepare a constitution for adoption. The number of members to serve on such a committee is

determined by the meeting. It could be any number of members. It should not be too large as it could become impractical. This Committee is called a "Steering Committee." Its function is to steer the formation of an organisation.

The "Steering Committee" elects its own temporary Chairperson and Secretary. They are called pro-tem Chairperson and pro-tem Secretary.

The need for the establishment of an

organisation can also be identified by concerned members of the Community. They could call a meeting of the Community to discuss the formation of an organisation. They could prepare a draft Constitution for discussion at the meeting, or the meeting could appoint a "Steering Committee" to prepare such a Constitution.

Once the meeting of the community has discussed the Constitution for the formation of a

community organisation, the meeting adopts the Constitution with necessary changes, if any. The organisation is then duly constituted.

The meeting can be called by notice to members of the community. Notice can be delivered personally to them or pamphlets could be issued informing the Community of the meeting. The people present at the meeting automatically become members of the organisation. They then elect their Officials and

an Executive Committee. The meeting can then entrust the Officials or the Executive Committee to carry out any specific task for which the meeting was called in the first place.

Any person who was not present at the inaugural meeting of the organisation i.e. the meeting where the organisation was formed, and wishes to join the organisation, such person must apply for membership as prescribed in the Constitution.

The organisation of the Community is then democratically constituted. The organisation then speaks on behalf of the Community on any matter which falls within its field. A civic body will speak on civic matters. A sport body will speak on sport matters. A cultural body will speak on cultural matters. A youth body will speak on youth matters.

In the next issue we will discuss what is a democratically constituted body.

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# ADVICE

## WHAT YOU SHOULD DO TO GET UIF MATERNITY PAY

What is UIF Maternity Pay? It is pay for women during the time that they are off work to have a baby.

Remember: The law says that a pregnant woman must not work in a factory

- for four weeks before the baby is born and
- for eight weeks after her baby is born.

YOU CAN GET MATERNITY PAY:

- if you have lost your job because you are pregnant OR
- if you are getting less than one third of your wages because you are pregnant.

WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR UIF MATERNITY PAY?

- You must pay UIF for at least 18 weeks in the year before the baby is born
- You can start getting UIF maternity pay when you are 4 months pregnant
- Before the baby is born you can get UIF maternity pay for up to 18 weeks
- After the baby is born you can get UIF maternity pay for up to 8 weeks.

This means that:

- You can get maternity pay for up to 26 weeks if you have paid UIF for long enough (at least 3 years)

(26 weeks = 18 weeks before the baby is born + 8 weeks after the baby is born)

- You can get one week of UIF maternity pay for every 6 weeks that you have been working and have had money deducted from your

wages for UIF. HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU GET?

You get just less than half (45 per cent) of your weekly wages before you stopped working because you became pregnant. For example if your wages were R30 a week you will get R13,58 a week

maternity pay. HOW DO YOU GET YOUR MATERNITY PAY?

When you stop working because of your pregnancy your boss will give you your blue card. This blue card is your UIF card.

You must then visit the offices of the De-

partment of Manpower, Thomas Boydell Building, (opposite Caledon Square Police Station) Cape Town Central.

There you will be given a certain form (UF 93) that you must take back to the nurse or doctor who is looking after you.

Once this has been filled in and returned to the Department of Manpower you will begin to receive your maternity pay.

The pay is sent to you in the post and it is a cheque.

After you have had your baby you must go back to the Department of Manpower. You must take your baby with you to show to the officials. They will fill out another form (UF 94) and maternity pay will be sent to you in the post for another 8 weeks.

ning industry) and contract workers cannot get U.I.F. benefits. This is very unfair because many of these workers are women.

In this issue of GRASSROOTS we explain workers rights to U.I.F. maternity pay and how to claim these benefits. We have spoken to women to find out how they feel about claiming maternity pay from the Department of Manpower and we have looked at the rights for maternity pay that women workers have won in other countries.

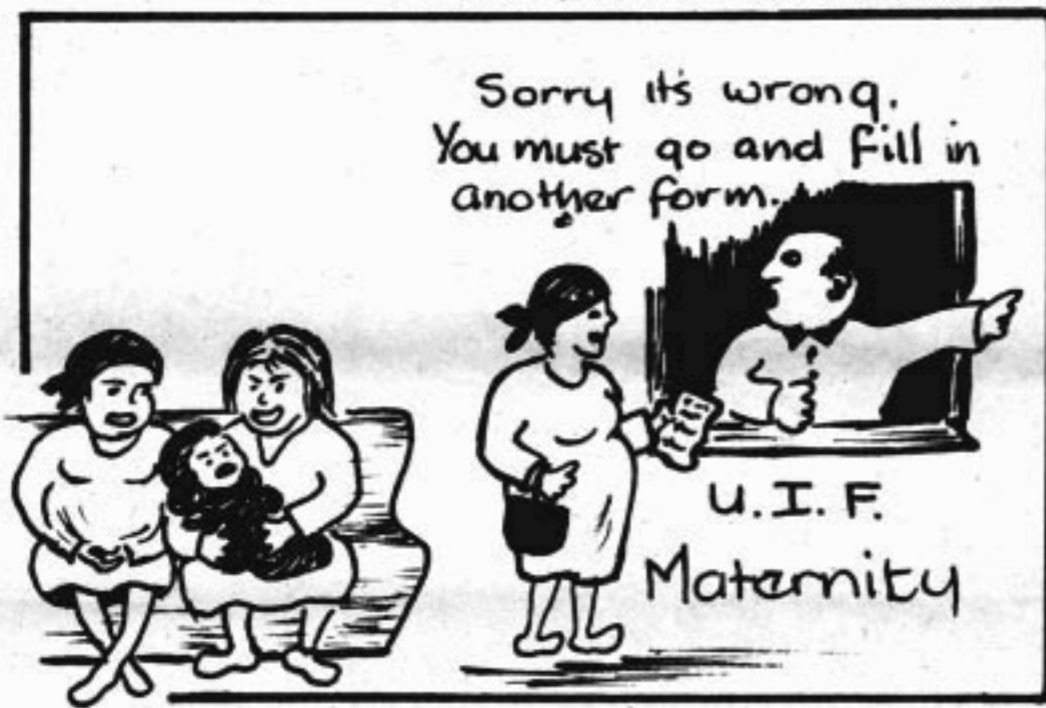
## Women's rights elsewhere

- In 1976 a law was passed in Holland that protects a woman's job if she is getting married or having a baby.

- In Australia women can get maternity benefits for 6 weeks before they are due to have their babies. In Canada it is 8 weeks and in the United Kingdom it is 11 weeks. The International Labour Organisation recommends that benefits should be paid to a woman from at least six weeks before she has her baby.

- In Australia women get 12 weeks maternity leave on full pay. In the United Kingdom pay is 90% of a woman's wages. In South Africa maternity pay is only 45% of wages.

- In some countries there are laws that make the bosses give pregnant woman a job in a different part of the factory if the work that they are doing is unhealthy (for example if they are working with certain chemicals).



## Getting pay is a problem

A NEW baby is not always fun.

She may mean mother has little sleep. She means lots of extra washing.

It may sometimes mean that mother must stop working.

In this issue of Grassroots you can read about all the things you have to do to claim maternity benefits.

We spoke to some working women who

have had children. They know what it is like to go to the officials to get their Act money.

One woman talked about all the places you have to go to. "You have to get your card filled in by the boss.

"Then you have to ask the sister at the clinic to write on the form.

"If these are not properly filled in you have to start all over again.

This wastes a lot of time."

Her friend spoke about all the questions you are asked at the office. "When you go for the first time after the baby is born you have to take the baby too. The men have to check that your baby is alive.

They ask you questions about the baby.

When was she born? What is her name? Is

she well? This is their way of making sure that you should get your money.

Another woman talked about the fact that men are in the office to see you. "They are helpful but it would be better if women could do that work. They would understand our problems.

"They would know what it is like to catch

buses when you are in your last weeks of pregnancy.

"And also when you have to carry a tiny baby and all the bags. We have a long way to travel to town and bus-fares are expensive.

"When you get there you have to wait a long time on hard benches. It is very tiring."

They all spoke about the injustice of not

getting an unbroken service record. "If you have maternity leave it means you don't get this. It is not fair especially if you go back to the same boss.

"Also when you get your money it is paid by cheque. Not everyone understands about cashing cheques."

These are some of the problems that working women have when they have children.

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## ADVICE

# Trusting your children

IN our two previous issues boys and girls told GRASSROOTS readers how they feel about relationships with each other and with their parents. For this story we spoke to different parents and asked them to respond to the views of the youth.

"WHEN WE WERE YOUNG..."

"I was pregnant and about to give birth, but I did not even know what was happening to me."

The mother from Bonteheuvel continued: "I don't want this to happen to my children. These days the children fortunately get the chance to see educational films at school.

"This makes it easier for me to discuss sex

with my children."

"My parents never talked to us. Times are better now. It is the young people who make their parents aware. During the school boycotts my children taught me what they mean by inferior education." This is the view of a Hanover Park mother.

"My mother never allowed me to go out. I

had no freedom and that is why I married a man I didn't really love - just to get away from home."

**TRUST, HONESTY AND CONCERN**  
**YOUTH:** We want to be trusted to choose our own friends, to go out and bring our friends home

**PARENTS:** One father

had very definitive views on this.

"They must stay inside until they are 16 years old. Until that age they don't know what is right or wrong and they will get mixed up with wrong friends.

## Freedom

"We parents know what is good for our children. We want to protect them."

A mother of a teenage daughter does not agree with this view at all. "If a child has never had freedom, she cannot appreciate it. I give my child freedom so I know that she doesn't have to leave my home in search of freedom.

## Trust

"She realises that having a child now, would restrict her freedom. I trust her. She doesn't live on an island and by meeting other young people she learns to cope with different people and types of situations.

"I like most of the friends that she brings

home. They are welcome but they know that if they don't behave respectfully I will ask them to leave.

"On the other hand, I expect total honesty from my child. She understands why: "The times we live in are dangerous, so I must know where she goes.

"In turn, I try to be honest with her. We are at the stage where we accept criticism from each other."

**YOUTH:** Many parents don't talk to their children. Some seem too busy to talk (Others warn but don't explain)"

**PARENTS:** "They have a point there. I have noticed that the more materialistic the parents are, the less they communicate with their children. Some of these homes are so posh and spotless that young people are made to feel unwelcome.

"As a result they prefer to roam the streets.

"Even at weekends their mothers are so busy polishing and cleaning that they have no time to spend with

the family. Today's young people have different values and this kind of attitude chases them away."

**GRASSROOTS:** What can be done to improve communication between parents and the youth?

• In some areas youth groups make a special effort to organise meetings with parents. This can be done more often. In this way parents and teenagers will be encouraged to talk more openly about sensitive topics.

• Community organisations can run discussion groups for parents where they can share ideas on how to improve the communication between themselves and their children.

On the whole most parents feel that today's youth are adapting well to a fast-changing world. One parent summarised this well. "The 1976 boycotts matured our children because they were faced with the harsh reality of an unjust system and the knowledge that this will only change if old and young work together."

## CHILDREN NEED NOT FEAR THE DOCTOR

MRS Jappie walks into Dr Brown's surgery with her 4 year old daughter Amina, who has a sore ear.

When the doctor tries to look into Amina's ear she starts screaming and kicking so that he has a real struggle to examine her. In the end everyone is upset - Dr Brown, Amina and Mrs Jappie.

This happens often in doctor's rooms, and parents must have wondered why their children, who are usually good, become impossible in the doctor's surgery.

Many children have been scared. Mothers often say: "If you are naughty, I'm going to take you to the doctor for an injection."

### Naughty

So the child links the doctor to punishment. This may be why Amina performed when Dr Brown tried to examine her.

She remembers that when she was naughty in the past, her mother threatened to take her to Dr Brown for an injection. She doesn't know him in any other way.

Why does Mrs Jappie threaten Amina with the doctor's needle? Like other mothers, she has probably worked very hard in the factory all day, and then she has to come home to cook, clean and see to the children.

This doesn't leave her with much time to sit and think about another

### You and the doctor

way of dealing with naughtiness.

What can Mrs Jappie do when the child is naughty?

### Explain

If the child is old enough, parents should explain to children why their behaviour is bad, and what could happen if they went on being naughty.

Parents should also provide children with something better to do - they may be naughty because they are bored. If they understand this,

it may be easier for them to behave.

Mrs Jappie also needs help with preparing Amina for the next time when she may have to visit Dr Brown.

She should explain to Amina that doctors are there to help people who are sick, and not to hurt.

Sometimes, to find out what is wrong inside, doctors may have to use torches and other instruments.


Also to make people better they may sometimes have to give injections. She should explain that this may hurt a little, but it will help to cure the sickness.

If Amina is prepared like this, the next time she has to go to Dr Brown and he tries to look into her ears, she won't perform.

She will know that he only wants to see what is wrong, and does not want to hurt her on purpose.

Many people go to the doctor for all kinds of reasons. Next time we'll look at other people's experiences, and see how these can be made easier.

We'll also look at what people's rights are when the visit the doctor.



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# AGM - IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

GRASSROOTS held its second annual general meeting on March 5, 6 and 7 at the Maryland Centre in Hanover Park. Present were more than 80 delegates from local worker and community organisations. The commitment of these delegates ensured that many hours were spent discussing the problems experienced in producing the newsletter. In this article, Grassroots looks at some of the issues raised and the debates surrounding them in the hope that this will provide a basis for further discussion amongst interested groups.

A community newspaper has to give its readers an *alternative* interpretation of their experiences. Grassroots must therefore not only write about the victories gained by the communities but also about the defeats they have suffered.

This was the message which Durban lawyer,

Mr Zac Yacoob, brought to the congress on its opening night.

Mr Yacoob, who spoke on alternative media, said that the commercial press did not hesitate to highlight the defeats suffered by the people negatively. It would thus be important for Grassroots to give adequate explanations of these defeats and in so doing, place them in a proper context.

Mr Yacoob also said that Grassroots must guard against becoming issue orientated. There was a need to give more attention to ongoing activities through which organisations could be sustained.

The paper should be aware of the limitations of community organisations and should not place people's hopes completely within these confines. (The message in Grassroots often is that through standing together, the people will succeed. But this is

not the final answer to every problem.)

His talk set the tone for the weekend. The hours of discussion which followed threw up very many important questions, some of which have yet to be resolved.

The adjourned AGM on April 4 looked at some of these questions:

• Should Grassroots take advertising from big multinational firms?

Grassroots policy has been not to accept advertising from such firms but to give preference to small businesses in black areas. This policy directive was taken to prevent the project becoming dependent on big advertisers who could in turn influence the content of the paper.

The advertising representative reported to the congress that he had exhausted the local market and needed to go to multinational firms. This proposal led to much heated debate.

Some delegates felt

that if Grassroots wanted to survive, it had to take whatever adverts it could get. They argued that it was not a crucial issue as long as the advertisers did not influence the content of the paper in any way.

It would also free the office staff to concentrate on other essential tasks such as distribution.

## Pressure

Others warned that there were dangers in becoming dependent in any way on the big firms. This could result in less effort being made to generate alternative funds. It would in other words be an easy option.

If big firms controlled a large portion of advertising, they could exert pressure on Grassroots not to cover a strike or other important worker issues, it was said.

• Should Grassroots carry news of an overtly political nature?

Some delegates felt

that the paper was far too low-keyed and should cover political events where there is community involvement.

Others argued against this saying that this was not the forum for overt politics. Other alternative media, such as SASPU National adequately catered for these needs.

The value of Grassroots, they said, lay in helping to build very basic organisation in the community and at the work place.

• Should Grassroots use the names of people in leadership positions.

When Grassroots was started, it was decided not to build up individuals into leadership positions. There were very few organisations at the time and it was necessary rather to promote the idea of the importance of organisation rather than individual leaders.

But since then, the secretary reported, ma-

ny organisations have mushroomed in the Western Cape with true grassroots leadership emerging in the process.

By not using names, the paper was not necessarily protecting local leaders who were already exposed within their communities. It would just mean that the paper would continue to publish opinions that were faceless, without life.

The general feeling of the delegates to the congress on this matter was that names should be used in consultation with the affected organisation.

• It was suggested by the newsgathering committee, that less time be spent on reading stories which are straightforward. Instead newsgathering meetings should focus attention on the most controversial stories, with others being scrutinised by the office.

Some delegates objected to this, saying

that this would reduce the involvement of all members in all stories.

Others argued that time was wasted on reading through stories which the members more often than not approved of. These stories in any case were submitted by organisations with the approval of their committees.

Presenting all stories to the meeting did not necessarily imply a greater democracy.

It amounted in fact to less time being devoted to critical debate with the whole process becoming an exercise in getting through a number of stories.

Delegates were also urged to elect permanent representatives to attend newsgathering meetings for at least three consecutive issues to ensure continuity. It was felt that too many different people attend the meetings making it difficult to develop a common understanding.

## Assisting with tasks

GRASSROOTS will employ two more people in this year. The one person will be required to assist with the tasks related to bringing out the newspaper - newsgathering, production, distribution and workshops.

With the paper expanding at a constant pace, more and more assistance was being required by the office staff. The situation would be eased if somebody were employed on a full-time basis.

A second person would be employed to work specifically in the

African areas where Grassroots was particularly weak.

It was reported at the congress that numerous attempts had been made to arrange meetings with people, to get community representatives to attend Grassroots general and newsgathering meetings and to build a strong distribution network in the townships. These did not prove very successful.

With a full-time person being employed, it was hoped that more coverage could be given to matters affecting people in these local areas.



Delegates taking a break from the Grassroots Conference recently held at the Maryland Centre, Hanover Park.

## ... more advice, humour

GRASSROOTS will carry analytical stories this year with more attention being given to defeats suffered by local organisations.

This was one of the many resolutions taken at the congress held a few weeks ago.

It was also agreed that earlier proposals for more humorous articles and exposes of conditions in areas, be implemented.

Delegates accepted the proposal by the newsgathering committee that the content of the centrespread not be limited to organisational problems; that it not be rigidly defined but left to discretion of a special committee subject to the newsgathering committee.

People participating

in Grassroots need more skills. Workshops therefore had to be linked to that aspect, it was decided.

It was also agreed that a manual on how to produce newsletters be drawn up and that the entire Grassroots operation be documented in the form of slides.

To assist the advice committee which draws up stories for the advice pages, it was suggested that a roster to visit local organisations be drawn up so that the committee can get feedback and input for these pages.

It was also agreed that more attention be given to street and shop sales with an effort being made to obtain feedback from distributors.

## Wide support for detainees

A meeting of over 600 people endorsed the National Declaration of Detentions on March 20 at St. Marks' Church Hall in Athlone.

The Declaration was the focus of a National Week of Solidarity with Detainees called by Parents' Support Committees in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town from March 13 - 20.

During the week, two basic demands were made - a call for the release of all detainees, and for an end to security laws. Also thousands of signatures were collected.

The meeting was the highlight of a week of activities in Cape Town.

Over 600 people, mainly youth, listened to speeches, drama and poetry highlighting the plight of detainees. There are over 200 people in detention at the moment.

A representative of the General Workers' Union told the meeting that detentions were part of an undemocratic society. A government that rules against the will of the people had to resort to terror, she said. The unions were one of many progressive organisations affected by detentions.

Dr David Webster, of the Johannesburg Detainees' Parents Support Committee, said: "Every detention mo-

bilizes tens of thousands of supporters. We act out of a sense of responsibility to our colleagues, not out of charity. We have a duty to carry on their work."

### Honourable

He named four broad groups who had been hit by detentions: progressive trade unionists, community leaders, students and youth.

"We know the detainees to be honourable and democratic people," he said, "and of the highest integrity."

Dr Webster warned that there would be trials soon. "But we say

the laws are on trial, and they are unjust laws. The laws made criminals out of democrats. We therefore must not call for their charge or release, but for the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees and prisoners of apartheid," he told the meeting to long applause.

Wantu Zenzile of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) urged people to unite.

"Detentions and repression call for greater clarity and action from the people. All democrats must join in a non-racial struggle to end oppression," he said.

*'Detentions and repression call for greater clarity and action from the people'*

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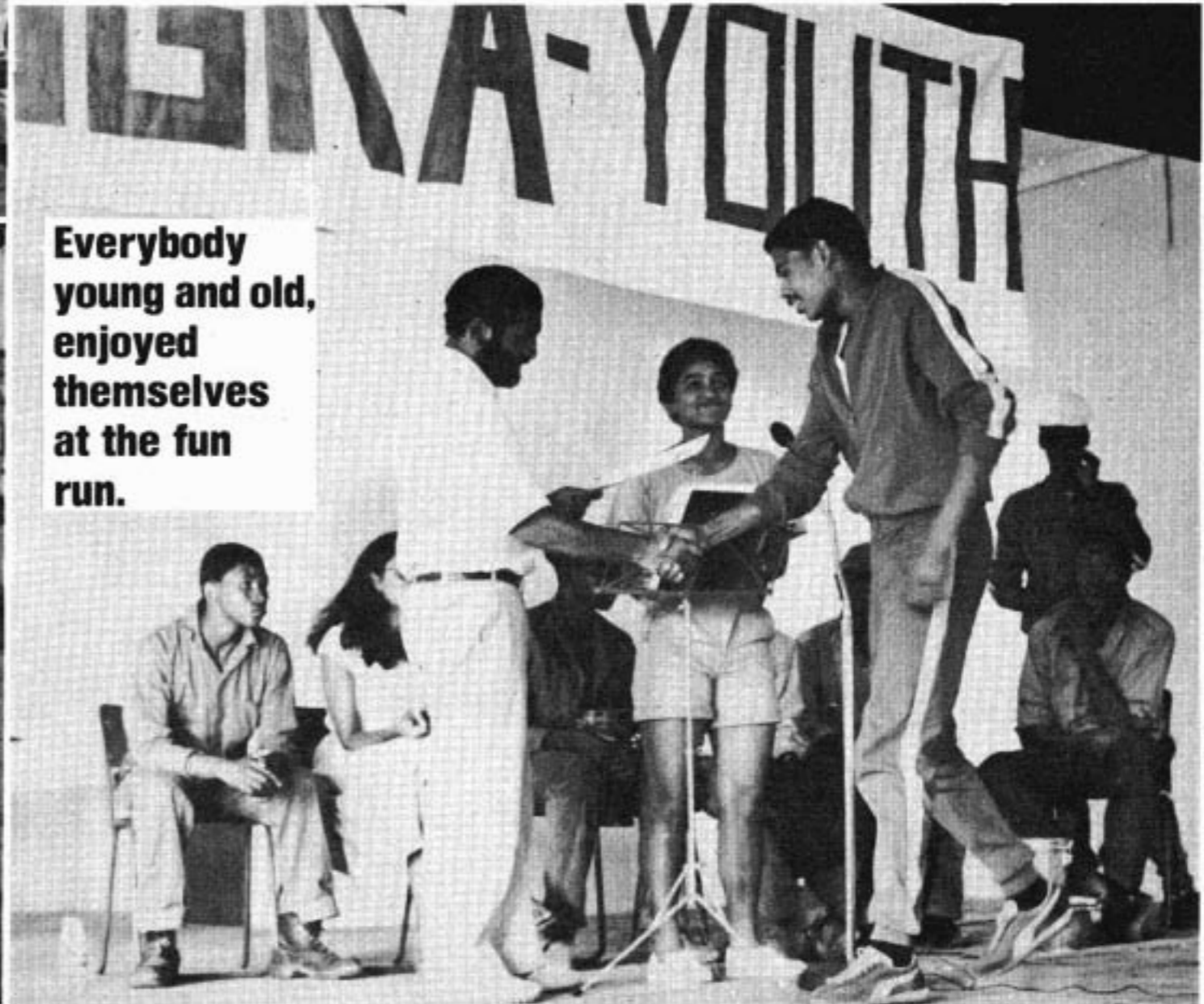
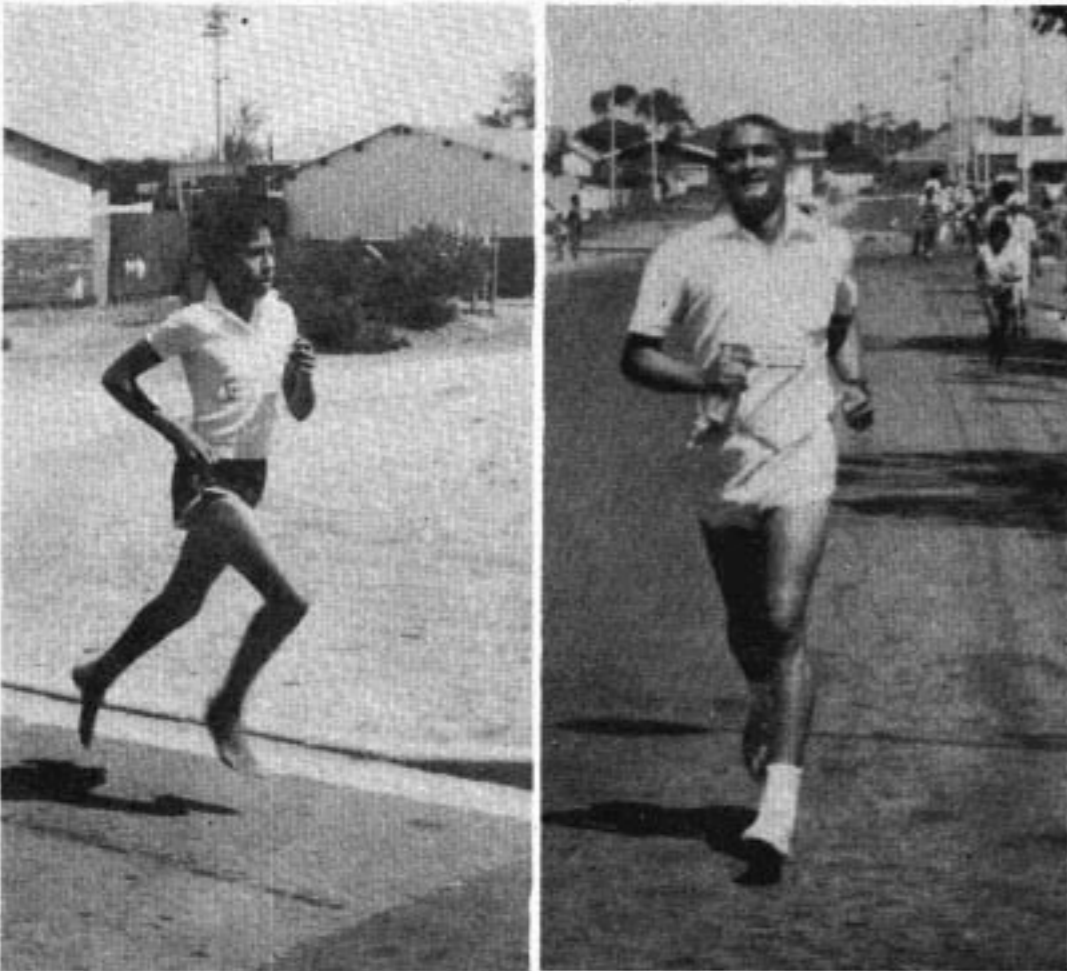
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# FUN RUNS



Everybody young and old, enjoyed themselves at the fun run.

## Working together builds youth

IN the past month fun runs were held by youth groups in Lansdowne, Facreton and Lotus River/Grassy Park. The aim of these events was to get youth and parents involved in something enjoyable to both.

Taking part were not only regular members of the youth clubs, but a wide range of people, from 14 to 40, and even four year olds.

The fun runs had come after weeks of hard work by the members of the youth clubs in which a spirit of unity was built up among themselves and made members feel more committed to their organisations while programmes were drawn up, proper planning was to be done, logos worked out, stickers, posters, entry forms and diplomas for the competitions were made.

This required a lot of planning, discussion

and organisation. The important thing was that the success of the event relied on the active participation of the whole group and not only of a few.

The youth saw the rewards of their hard work when old and young came together in their numbers to enjoy the day. Everyone looked pleased. Some parents expressed their satisfaction with what the young people had organised and some young people said that they would like to join the clubs that organised the fun runs.

Out of this we can see that some gains have been made for the youth clubs. Sometimes the youth have problems with their parents not wanting to allow them out to attend youth meetings. Is it because their parents are just being nasty? No, in most cases it is because the parents don't know

what is going on in the youth clubs. Also, it is the "democratic" right of parents to know where children go to and what they are doing.

Now at the fun runs they could see what had been organised by the youth and they looked very pleased and satisfied because they enjoyed themselves. But should the youth members only wait until they organise fun runs or something similar to let the parents know what they do or shouldn't they always speak about their youth clubs and get their parents interested in what they are doing.

Another thing is that other young people in the community do not know of the youth clubs or do not know what happens there. They too could see for themselves and some of them were so excited that

## YOUTH FOCUS

they said they wanted to join the youth clubs.

In our oppressed communities there are not many places where young people can meet other young people, enjoy themselves and at the same time develop themselves into responsible people.

The government does not spend millions of rands on facilities in our townships like the Muizenberg Pavillion and floodlights on White beaches, so it is up to us to create opportunities for leisure for ourselves. By doing this we attract and maintain the interest of a broad section of young people.

## Happy birthday Molo Songololo

*HALLO! MOLO!*



MOLO Songololo (it means Hello Centipede) is a magazine for children aged between 6 and 13.

Molo was started on April 20, 1980 which means it will be celebrating its second birthday later this month.

The aims of the magazine are:

- To encourage children to communicate in a meaningful way with each other and
- To provide a means

for them to express themselves and their feelings about the community they live in, the school they attend, the friends they have or anything which children feel to be important in their lives.


It is the only magazine of its kind in South Africa as it allows children to state their views and opinions and to realise that they are valuable contributors to their society and to the


way it works.

It tries to fill the gap in their education by encouraging them to think for themselves and have confidence in their abilities to do so.

No other children's magazine in South Africa encourages non-competitive values such as sharing and caring for others.

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# RENTS PLAY

COMMUNITY plays are becoming a common sight in Lavender Hill.

On Sunday March 18, a large number of Lavender Hill Residents gathered in Shepherd Court to watch a play about the Day of Action.

The play attracted a lot of attention.

People staying in the courts hung out of their windows and others stood in the doorways while a lot of youth packed the staircases in the court.

Everyone took part in the fun and laughter and as the play progressed some people were so caught up in the excitement that they joined in.

The play however also told about serious problems in the area like the high rents and lack of maintenance.

Organised by the Lavender Hill Residents Association, the play was the second of its kind held in the area in the last year.

Both were very successful in that there was a great deal of community involvement and it brought more people into contact with the Residents Association.



# Minister wrong on Lavis lights - CHL

THE people of Bishop Lavis have re-emphasised their determination to have electricity in their houses.

At a meeting on March 12, the people discussed articles in Grassroots and a weekly paper which said it was possible for the Citizens Housing League to obtain a loan from businesses (if they cannot get money from the government) without first getting permission from the Department of Community Development.

CHL always told Lavistown residents they had to get permission first before they could apply for a loan.

At the mass meeting a delegation of 12 people were elected to go to CHL's head office to find out why they had not yet tried to find a loan on the open market.

They went to see CHL's managing director Mr E Pohl on March 19.

At the start of the meeting Mr Pohl contradicted the Minister of Community Development's statement (as published in Grassroots) that CHL did not require his permission to get a loan.

He said the installation of electricity depended entirely on Community Development (DCD). They had approved a government

loan for electricity and had to make the money available. As far as he knew, the DCD did not have money at this point.

Asked if it was not possible for CHL to have used the money they are presently spending on building luxury homes for whites, Mr Pohl said: 'When CHL works with money, it merely thinks in terms of black and white.'

The delegation felt that with this statement he implied that the projects which were to benefit the whites re-

ceived priority.

After the meeting the people expressed their extreme dissatisfaction at the manner in which the CHL and DCD are treating the people's call for electricity.

A member of the delegation said they took exception to Mr Pohl's apparent racist statement and the manner in which CHL and DCD seem to be contradicting each other and always passing the buck.

He continued: 'The delegation feels disgusted at the fact that while

CHL was not prepared to make the long-promised fund available for electricity, it was prepared to subsidise homes (by about (R1-m) for whites in District Six.

'The people of Bishop Lavis feel that the DCD should get its priorities straight and take responsibility for providing the promised money for electricity.

'We are aware that the CHL and DCD will always try to pass the buck. We have pledged to continue the struggle for electricity until we succeed.'

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