

# grassroots

THE PAPER ABOUT YOU

MARCH 1981 Vol. 2 No. 1

NO JANUARY ISSUE

# INSIDE

## All about HP

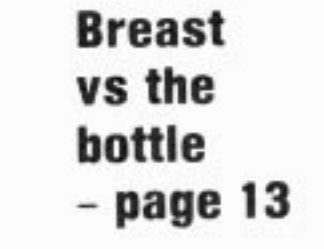


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Children work 15 hours a day - page 3



Breast vs the bottle - page 13



Help us look at grassroots - page 15



**HOUSING**  
SPECIAL SURVEY - pages 8 & 9

# 'WE WANT ELECTRICITY'

## Fuel costs too much

**FOR BISHOP LAVIS!**

BISHOP LAVIS IS ONE OF THE FEW AREAS IN CAPE TOWN WITH NO ELECTRICITY

A MEETING WAS HELD AT GREENLANDS - AND A COMMITTEE TO LEAD THE ELECTRICITY CAMPAIGN WAS ELECTED

HOUSE MEETINGS WERE HELD, AND MANY SIGNED A PETITION DEMANDING ELECTRICITY

NOW WE NEED TO ORGANISE ALL SIX AREAS IN BISHOP LAVIS

SO WE CAN FIGHT TO WIN OUR DEMANDS!

BISHOP Lavis is one of the few communities in Cape Town where the houses do not have electricity. This has not only been a major inconvenience, but also a burning issue among the residents for many years.

Late last year the residents of Greenlands, a section of Bishop Lavis, initiated a campaign to canvass for support among residents to get the authorities to have electricity installed in their homes. The people have said that in "this day and age electricity is a right and not a privilege as the local authority wants to make us believe."

At a public meeting attended by 150 people in Greenlands, the residents expressed anger about the lack of electricity in their homes. They claim that they spend on the average R42 per month on alternative forms of power such as gas, wood and oil. Many reported that they spend more on fuel than on rent.

At this meeting the people pledged support for the campaign, and a steering committee was elected to co-ordinate the project and to relate their demands to the authorities. Street representatives were also elected onto the steering committee.

The area has been canvassed. House meetings have been held and a petition has been signed by the vast majority of the people

in Greenlands. To broaden the campaign, meetings were held in Riverton, another section of Bishop Lavis. In this area the people are also taking up the issue and are represented on the steering committee.

The committee, together with the residents conducted a survey to obtain facts and figures to back their case. The local authority indicated to the committee that the people would have to pay R50 installation fee to Escom.

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## E.P.C. petitions Council

THERE are many problems in Mitchell's Plain. One of the most pressing is the due date of the electricity accounts. Many pay their accounts after due date and have to pay 10 percent extra.

A survey conducted in Rocklands in October, 1979 showed that the majority actually paid the overdue rate.

At a mass meeting

attended by 1500 people in November 1979, it was decided to have the due date changed to the 7th of the month. The matter was taken up by COMPRA without success.

At the end of 1980 the Lentegeur Ratepayers', Welfare and Civic Association, the Portland Residents' Association and the Rocklands Ratepayers' Asso-



ciation cut off their ties with COMPRA because the umbrella body was "not taking up the real issues affecting the people of Mitchell's Plain."

These three associations, together with

other concerned individuals throughout Mitchell's Plain established the Electricity Petition Committee.

The main objective of the E.P.C. is to petition the City Council to change the due date for electricity accounts to the 7th of the month. To this end the people of Mitchell's Plain are being involved at every level and in every

aspect of the campaign.

\* Collective group efforts have been made in Strandfontein, Westridge, Lentegeur, Rocklands, Portland and Woodlands to collect the 5313 signatures so far obtained. The door to door petitioning is still continuing.

\* To inform residents of the progress, regular,

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## Workers struggle for Union recognition



THE Fishing company, Irvine and Johnson, have laid off between 100 and 140 contract workers following a dispute involving the Food and Canning Workers Union. So far, efforts to have the workers reinstated have proved fruitless.

In April last year the FCWU began organising on-shore workers employed in the trawling division in the docks.

By June, 169 of the workers were fully paid up members of the union and these workers asked the Union to approach management with their complaints:

low wages, long hours, no transport home, no meal or tea breaks, ineffective protective clothing.

Officials of the FCWU had their first meeting with I & J management on June 12.

They were asked to put the workers complaints in writing. They did and the bosses replied by saying that the complaints were groundless.

In the meantime, however, the workers had been granted tea and lunch breaks and the foremen had been instructed not to swear

at the workers.

Early in July the FCWU asked for permission to meet with the workers during lunch-time. This was refused.

In August the Union secretary, Mr J Theron asked for an appointment with management so that he could introduce the local union branch committee. This was turned down on the grounds that "it would be inconvenient at that time".

The FCWU was also told by a representative of management that many workers were joining the Trawlermen

and Line Fishermen's Union (TLFU) and they no longer regarded the FCWU as representative of the workers.

Later that month the workers reported to the FCWU officials that a certain Mr Solomons who had been a wage clerk on West Quay for about three years was being introduced to them by foremen as the organiser for the TLFU.

The FCWU then wrote to the TLFU, an affiliate of the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA) requesting a meeting. This was refused.

The TLFU had never

organised the on-shore workers at the docks. Almost all of them were African contract workers. It only tried to enroll members once the FCWU had already organised the workers; But the workers remained loyal to the FCWU.

In mid-September between 100 and 140 contract workers were retrenched when their contracts expired. Most of them were workers of long standing with the firm.

On September 23 the FCWU met with head-office management of I & J and were

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# WORKERS STRUGGLE IN EAST

"AMANDLA" is what the workers shout when they enter their union offices in East London. In the past year they have flexed their muscles in a massive struggle with their bosses. They have organised themselves into democratically elected workers' committees in their trade unions - SAAWU (the largest trade union in East London) African Food and Canning Workers' Union, and Western Province General Workers Union. These are all non-racial trade unions.

The workers in East London have followed the path of militant workers in other parts of the country. But they are also cutting their own path, giving other workers

important examples and lessons. The struggle of the East London workers for democratic representation of their own choice has not been easy.

The bosses have resisted them; the police have harassed them, detaining workers and organisers, and obstructed their organising. But whatever the obstacles the workers say: "We are clear where we have come from and where we are going."

As one worker explained: "Before there were progressive unions in East London, the workers of the area were totally unorganised. They had their grievances, but the liaison committees could not pass these to

management. They did not represent us workers. The workers were grumbling in private and suffering in silence but we had that burning desire to make our being felt.

During the year of 1979 one of our brothers introduced trade unions to the workers of East London. People were at first reluctant to join as they were not aware of what fruits it bears for them. But through education and perseverance workers have gradually realised how good this was."

Because of their militancy the workers and their trade unions in East London have been accused by the government of being

'political unions' and not worried about the basic rights of workers in the factories. But the workers reject this. They say "if you are pricked by a thorn, then you must use a thorn to get it out."

They claim that their unions are the only ones that are really concerned with conditions on the factory floor. They insist on strong worker control and democratic committees in the factories. As one explained, "If I go to the boss on my own then I will be victimised. But if we all go, or if we send our elected representatives, then he has to listen. The union is not in the offices. It is here on the factory floor."

IN South Africa, and especially in East London where the workers are militant, the most misfortune for us Blacks is the Nationalist Government. The Nationalist Government is an advantage to the managements who like to hide behind the law, because whatever the workers do collectively the management are afraid of."

That is what a worker from Raylite Batteries said when speaking about the struggle for workers rights in his factory last year.

Conditions were bad he explained. If workers were even one minute late then they lost the whole R5 attendance bonus.

The workers had complained that Mdan-tane, where they lived, was far away and the bus service was very bad. But the bosses were not sympathetic to their problems. Workers are being fired for the smallest things. Sometimes 4 workers were fired a week.

## JOIN

So the workers at Raylite started to join SAAWU in May last year. They organised themselves.

A few workers gave out joining forms at the factory. "They went like hot cakes", he said. We told the workers that they should unite and stand with the union for the workers' rights.

## UNITY

"But the union could do nothing by itself if the workers don't stand for themselves. The union is not a sort of press button machine. The workers are the union."

At the beginning of August the workers elected their workers committee at the union offices.

## LIAISON

"The liaison committee stood for the employers and not for the workers. If management wanted to speak then the liaison committee worked. But if the workers had complaints then the bosses became deaf. The workers were sick and tired of this liaison committee system. They wanted their own democratically elected workers committee. That is why the whole of East London has been taken by this



Workers show strength in East London.

## Workers strike at liaison committee

thing."

### WORKERS

When the boss heard about the workers' committee he refused to accept it because it was part of SAAWU which had refused to register with the government. The worker said, "he acted just like a dictator. Anyone who disagrees with him he said can just go and leave the factory."

The next morning

the workers met in the canteen. They wanted to discuss their workers' committee again but the boss refused.

Then the Security Police arrived and told them to go back to work.

### DISCUSS

The workers said: "We are not on strike. We just want to discuss this thing. We want to be union members and

workers in this factory."

After a lot of arguing the police gave them five minutes to leave, or else they would be pushed out. When the workers stayed the police charged in and beat them, the workers said.

People were hurt and trampled. They lost watches and clothes were torn and bleeding.

The workers came to

the union offices to discuss this problem. The organisers tried to speak to the Raylite bosses and come to an agreement. But just when things started to be sorted out the police detained two SAAWU officials as they left the negotiations.

A few days later four of the workers committee were also detained. They were in prison for 17 days and only released on 28th August. They were charged with inciting others to strike.

While these worker leaders were in prison there was confusion outside.

### RELEASED

Management now refused to speak to the remaining SAAWU official. The workers demanded that everyone should be re-instated in their old jobs and their leaders be released.

Meanwhile the Security Police visited most of the skilled workers to persuade and intimidate them to go back. A crack in the solid wall of the workers' unity started when some workers returned to work to be re-employed.

But the rest of the workers refused to lose their previous service and benefits. "We were living on crumbs, SAAWU couldn't afford a relief fund. The whole area is very poor and our brothers couldn't afford to help us financially."

### STRIKE

In the middle of the third month the strike was called off. The workers had lost their jobs but they were proved to be in the right. On Monday 1st February 1981 when the workers and organiser were due to appear in court, the police dropped all charges against them. "This thing proves us to be in the right. But why should we have lost our jobs just because of this police interference?" they now say.

Even though they have lost their jobs, the Raylite workers feel they have struck a blow against the liaison committee system. As one worker said in a message to the bosses: "Even if you hide your heads in the sand not wanting to face the facts, by the time you take your heads out of the sand, the facts will be there."

## Stevedores organise and win victory

"FOR many years we have been treated like dogs in these docks. But now we have made the bosses start to pay for their sins of the past. We have shown them what it is when the stevedores are organised."

Before they joined the Western Province

General Workers Union and elected a committee to negotiate with management the East London stevedores had not even the smallest rights in the docks.

There were no pensions even though many of the workers are old men.

There was no sick

leave, no paid leave, and no UIF.

"We were all treated as casuals. It made no difference if we were registered or unregistered. One day we came to work and we would get paid. The next day there was no work and our families went hungry."

But after the stevedores organised themselves in Sept/Oct 1980 they forced management to change their lives for the better.

The committee and the union officials have just negotiated a new agreement.

Their daily wage is now R10,75 when be-

fore it was only R7,91. They will get sick leave, paid annual leave and UIF. Sunday overtime is increased from R12,33 to R20.

But best of all, the stevedores can no longer be treated as casuals. They now must get a guaranteed wage

for the week even if there is no work in the docks.

"Now we are all being treated equally. Before the bosses divided us by giving a job to this one and not to that one. But now we have broken that sys-

tem. We have struggled together.

"Now we will benefit together. We have come a long way from the kennels of the past, but we are not sleeping. We have still other victories to win in these docks before we will be satisfied."

## COMING SOON TO MITCHELL'S PLAIN

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JEWELLERS

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# LONDON

## Chloride workers crack bosses' unity

IN the Chloride factory in East London the strength of the workers has meant victory for their committee and their union, SAAWU. In doing so they have blasted a hole in East London's opposition to SAAWU. One of the Chloride workers explained what had happened.

"We workers came to the SAAWU offices on our own. When we started organising the other workers one of our brothers in the union, an organiser, was detained by the Ciskeian security police. "We tried to drive fear out of our co-workers and ultimately we organised 80 percent of the Chloride workforce within three weeks.

### TACTICS

"Then the management noticed this. It started intimidatory tactics and heavily harassed us. We were barred from meeting workers and some of us who were organising were prevented from speaking with each other. The management tried by all means to stop this organising of the workers but they did not succeed.

"The workers were disillusioned with the liaison committee.

They saw that it was one sided so they decided to join the genuinely progressive side.

In June 1980 the workers committee was democratically elected. Our election meant the burial of the liaison committee.

### STAGE 2

At this stage our unity was put to the test by management trying to expel a co-worker. But the management, when they read the mood of the workers, revoked that decision. That meant a first victory for us workers.

"We went to the management to personally introduce ourselves as the workers committee but the said gentleman wanted to have no dealing with us.

"The turning point in the attitude of management was brought about by a dismissal of another worker. All the workers pledged solidarity with him in implementing our slogan - 'an injury to one is an injury to all'.

### FORCED

"Management was forced to call on the workers' committee to negotiate. Even though we failed in that case we achieved our greater

target. "Management had recognised our committee on an interim basis.

"From then on the matter was conducted between our union officials and the management. We were advised that elections would be held in the factory to ensure that democracy was being practiced. There was a referendum and the workers voted a massive YES (over 90 percent) for their union SAAWU. Nominations and elections for the committee were held and the results were the return of the original committee.

"But then the Ciskeian security police with the help of the South African police detained some members of our committee. "This made the workers very angry. They pressed the management and so the bosses pressed Sebe for our immediate release. "A few days later Sebe was forced to give in to the workers demands for the release of their leaders. This was another demonstration of the power of the unity of the workers. On the 11th November we won our latest victory when the Chloride management recognised SAAWU as the chosen union of the Chloride workers."



Workers and organisers at union offices.

## 'Amen to liaison committees'

ONE of the first unions to organise in East London was the African Food and Canning Workers Union.

The workers in Langeberg Kooperasie Beperk (LKB), Western Province Preserving Company and Collindale Cannery are among the lowest paid and badly treated workers in East London.

But through their own struggles conditions in some of these factories have changed.

The AF & CWU first started organising at Langeberg and Western Province Preserving in late 1979.

At Western Province Preserving Company the workers had a long

struggle to win management recognition of their committee and their union.

When the boss agreed to their demands, the workers' committee went to his office to negotiate.

The struggle at Langeberg was easier because the boss there had heard about the workers' struggle at Western Province. But still the workers had to fight to get their committee and union recognised.

In Nov/Dec 1980 the workers committee from both factories together with their union officials negotiated a joint agreement over

wages with the bosses. Before the meeting women at Western Province Preserving only got paid R17 per week starting wages and R24 starting wages at Langeberg. The men started at R23 in Western Province and R31 at Langeberg. Now from February women in both factories are paid R38 starting wages.

"Since we had that struggle in Langeberg and Western Province Preserving conditions have changed completely. But the conditions in the other canning factories in East London are still very bad. Now we must help them in their struggle."

# Hardship in Elsie's River transit camp

SEVEN of the eight toilet/washing blocks in the Elsie's River Transit Camp have been boarded up because vandals have destroyed the facilities and fittings inside them.

According to community workers in the Elsie's River complex, violence and destructiveness has become the major problem in the area.

"The civic organisations in the various suburbs are finding it extremely difficult to hold meetings to discuss community problems because people are afraid to attend because they expect to be assaulted by the many young thugs on their way home," GRASS-



ROOTS was told. "Many ministers have switched their traditional Sunday services in the evenings to the afternoon for the same reason." Police have given the

thumbs down to the formation of vigilante type groups. They are insisting that people interested in helping combat the gangs problem should join the police reserv-

ists. However, most are reluctant to do this - because of the stigma - despite assurances that they will not be used during civil disturbances which may see them ranged against their own children.

# Exploitation of child labour

THE wage exploitation of young people from the country areas - who are lured to Cape Town by false promises - is causing concern.

The Food and Canning Union has taken up the cudgels for a number of youngsters, but most cases remain unreported.

Through the efforts of the FCU last year three young up-country workers in a Woodstock samoosa factory received back-pay totalling more than R990.

The three women had worked a 76-hour week at the appropriately named Colonial Halaal factory for R40 or R50 a month until they walked out at the beginning of March.

Towards the end of last year the FCU in-

vestigated the case of three young girls and a youth from Robertson and Wolesley who had been lured into employment for a spice factory owner in Lansdowne.

They worked for him for varying periods between May and November.

They all claimed that they had never received wages for working an 80-hour week.

All claimed that they had been sworn at and assaulted by their employer. Three claimed that they had been subjected to electric shocks (their employer struck them with a shock stick).

Two claimed that he had molested them indecently.

Three shared a bed made of cool drink bottles and covered with a piece of rubber and a door in a leaking shack. The fourth shared a broken signle bed with the male worker - she is 17.

No money was ever sent to their parents.

Efforts to obtain compensation for the four girls was short-circuited when they all agreed privately with their employer to accept a nominal settlement from him.

THE Domestic Worker Association has encountered a great many cases of exploitation of young children from the farms.

Among the areas where the practice is most rife are Rylands, Belhar and more recently Mitchell's Plain.

One of the more serious cases of exploitation was when a 16-year-old domestic "slave" was hospitalised after she contracted tuberculosis.

For two years the child had been employ-

ed as a domestic for a Black family. She received no wages at all. Aside from doing housework and baby-sitting she had to look after her employer's father who was a bed-ridden invalid.

He was incapable of doing anything for himself and his bedding had to be changed hourly.

The prospective employer of child "slave labour" usually reserves Sunday afternoon for his sortie into the countryside. He is "armed" with a few items of old clothing.

Because they earn next to nothing on the farms the parents fall easy prey to the promises of the city folk.

Often a country child is "sold into slavery" in exchange for an old jacket.

Promises to send food and the child's wages seldom, if ever, materialise. Often the employer gives the parents a false address.

DWA secretary Maggie Oewies scathingly attacked this practice of child exploitation.

"These people must realise that they are ruining our future. They

"The problem should be included on the agenda for meetings. Practices like this should be rejected in the civic organisations' constitutions."

### DEMAND

Although the DWA has had cases of eight year olds who have been lured into service, the average ages range from 12 to 14.

"Once they are older than 14 the exploiters find them less easy to brain-wash," said Ms Oegies. "Whenever we encounter a case we try to send the child back to her parents."

She said it was time that the parents on the farm stood up and demanded decent wages for their labour on the farms. In this way they would be able to look after their children properly and the financial lure of the city would disappear.

### THE LAW

City mothers working in factories should also demand better wages so they could

## Civic divided

THE Schotsche Kloof Civic Association has co-opted Mr Ebrahim Schroeder of the Freedom Party onto its committee. This occurred at a public meeting held on 26th January.

The civic association is finding itself in a state of crisis as much division exists among the people about the nomination of a Freedom Party member.

Two members have resigned from the association as they refuse to serve on the same committee with a Freedom Party member.

A campaign has been started in the area to bring about the removal of Mr. Schroeder from the civic association.

The Annual General Meeting of the association will be held in March where this matter will be tabled.

HERE

GLOSS PAINT PER 5 LITRE

P.V.A. PER 5 LITRE

ROCK GRIP VINYL SIL PER 5 LITRE

ROCK GRIP GLOSS PER 5 LITRE

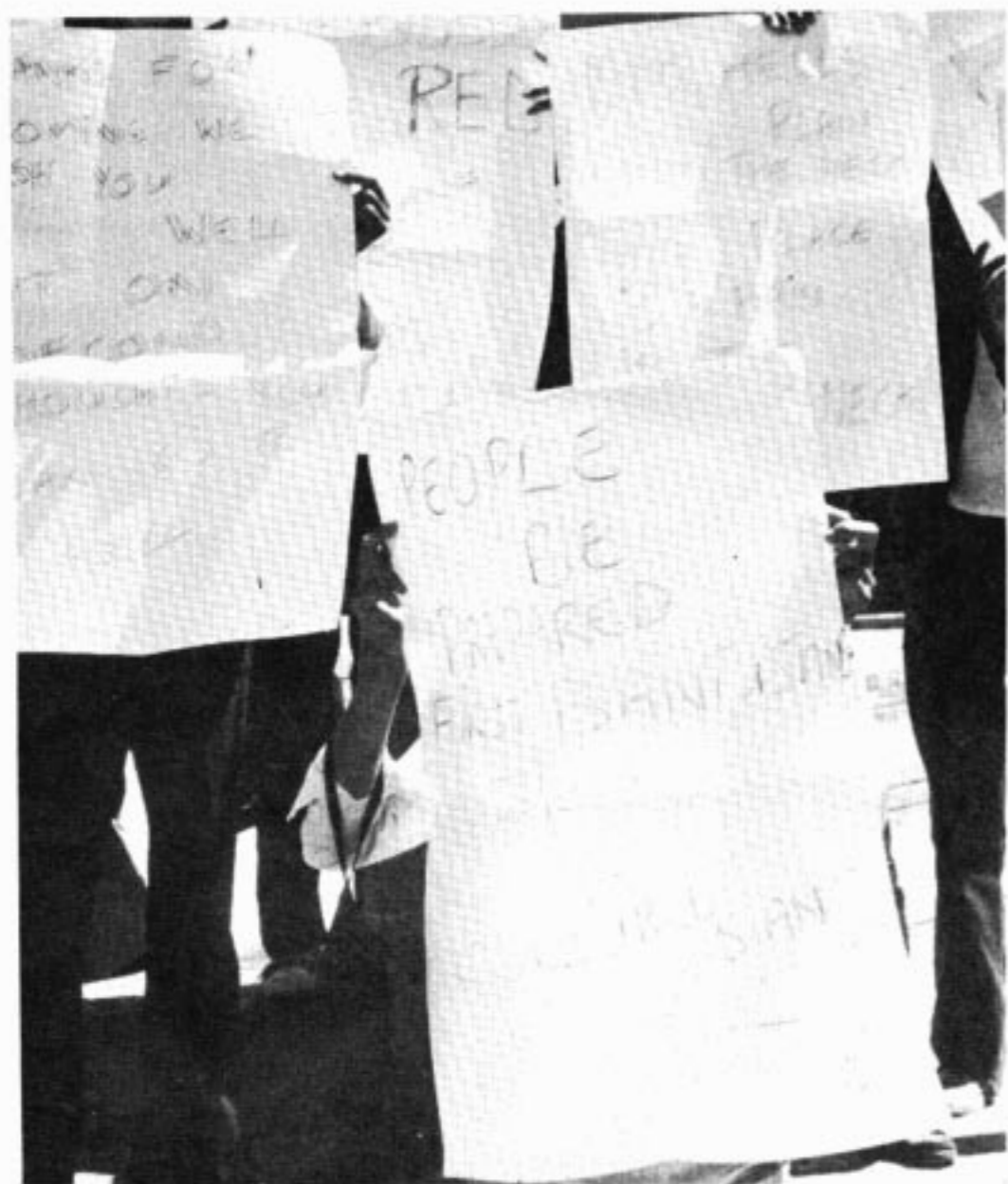
110mm U/G PIPE PER 6m LENGTH

HLONE

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WE PROMISE





# Mitchell's Plain demos reject Colouredstan

A placard demonstration by about 20 Mitchell's Plain residents was allowed to continue without any interference from the police.

The demonstration was held in the main square of the Town Centre.

It was staged to coincide with the official opening of the Centre by the Minister of Community Development Pen Kotze on January 28.

Although the police did nothing active to break up the demon-

stration which lasted for more than an hour, their presence in scores probably intimidated many of the onlookers.

However, it did not deter a handful from stepping forward and joining the demonstrators.

No doubt in anticipation of possible police action one of the posters read: "If the Kappies can demonstrate why can't we?"

This was a reference to a demo at the opening of parliament by the all-women, anti-

black racist Kappie Commando.

Afterwards some of the demonstrators were followed by a police colonel who took their car number.

Some of the slogans were:

PEOPLE BE PREPARED - FIRST BANTUSTANS THEN COLOUREDSTANS

THIS OPENING MAKES US SO SICK WE FEEL LIKE KOTZE-ING

COME TO MITCHELLS PLAIN FOR BETTER LIVES AMONG THE FLIES

PAY MY DADDY A DECENT WAGE (CHILD DEMONSTRATOR)

THERE'S A DALLAS IN OUR MIDST : P.W. BOTHA

STAKE YOUR FUTURE IN MITCHELLS PLAIN: WHY A MILLION RAND ARREARS AND 800 EMPTY HOUSES?

# Creche needs help after fire

AT Mountainview Creche in Lavender Hill teachers are battling to collect equipment after a fire swept through the storeroom destroying everything.

have to make do with the odd blankets and toys that we have scraped together.

The children were bright and eager when Grassroots visited the

creche but there was very little that was bright about the hall in which they were playing. It had none of the tables and chairs usually used by the

children. "It is simple things that give the children much fun," said Mrs Benjamin.

"We need lots of egg boxes and plastic milk

bottles to keep the children busy. Also the children make trains with empty lunch wrap boxes and empty toilet rolls," she said.

"It took us a long time to collect such odds and ends and now we have to start all over again," she said.

Anybody who has

any spare toys or anything that they think can be of use to Mountainview Creche, please contact Grassroots at 43-2117.

In the burnt out store, the remains of the stacks of mattresses which the children use for beds, are scattered and only a shell of a table remains.

Curtains, linen and furniture were all destroyed in the fire.

Mrs Hester Benjamin who runs the creche, said that all the toys collected over more than a year had been burnt.

"We spent weeks raising funds for the creche last year and collecting donations and now we have little to show for it," she said.

The more than 50 children at the creche now only have one hall to play in. They will

# Residents petition over fences

AT the beginning of this year people living in the New Section of Kalksteentfontein received new leases with a clause forbidding them to sign hire purchase agreements without the Council's consent.

Residents feel that this is robbing them of a very basic freedom of choice.

Described as "houses for the very poor" by

the Council there are 215 dwellings in this section. It is for people earning less than R100 - like pensioners, people receiving state grants and single parent families.

They have two rooms and the rent is R10 a month.

They are built with poor quality bricks which sweat in winter and the children are

always sick with chest problems.

When the people moved in they understood that they could build fences around their homes and many of them did.

But after a time the Council's rangers moved in, pulled down the fences and carted away all the materials.

The people drew up a petition protesting

against this action. After a time the Council told them that they could have their material back on condition that they fetched it back themselves and that they could prove that what they were taking belonged to them.

In most cases the people found this impossible.

FOR ALL YOUR PAINTING & BUILDING REQUIREMENTS CONTACT THE EXPERTS

**CAMPWELL HARDWARE**

56 Halt Road, Elsies River. Ph. 98-9575/98-3519  
57 Belgravia Road, Athlone. Ph. 67-5993/67-0151  
Victoria Road, Grassy Park. Ph. 72-8887/72-7188

HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF OUR SPECIALS!

GLOSS PAINT PER 5 LITRE	FROM R6,50	GRIPWELL GLOSS ENAMEL PER 5 LITRE	R9,95
P.V.A. PER 5 LITRE	FROM R2,95	PLASTERSIZER PER 5 LITRE	R1,95
ROCK GRIP VINYL SILK PER 5 LITRE	R15,95	GRIPWELL HIGH COVER P.V.A. PER 25 LITRES	R25,95
ROCK GRIP GLOSS PER 5 LITRE	R15,95	114mm STEEL DOOR JAMB	R16,95
110mm U/G PIPE PER 6m LENGTH	R18,95	40mm WASTE P.V.C. PIPE PER 6m LENGTH	R11,95

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# GANGS IN RAVENSMEAD

**RAVENSMEAD HAS 30 000 RESIDENTS...**

**AND ONLY**

ONE COMMUNITY HALL

ONE CRECHE

ONE HIGH SCHOOL

ONE CINEMA

ONE SPORTS FIELD

**THESE FACILITIES ARE NOT ENOUGH!**

**MANY PEOPLE IN RAVENSMEAD WERE FORCED OUT OF THEIR HOMES IN PAROV BY THE GROUP AREAS ACT**



**THEY WERE PAID VERY LITTLE FOR THEIR HOMES, AND COULD ONLY AFFORD TO BUILD ONE-ROOM SHACKS**



**THESE SHACKS ARE OVER-CROWDED AND UNHYGENIC**



**THE YOUTH ARE BORED AND HAVE NO-WHERE TO GO - THEIR HOMES ARE OVER-CROWDED, AND THERE ARE VERY FEW RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**



**THE MANY SHEBEENS IN THE AREA NEED GANGS TO PROTECT THEM**



**TO THE FRUSTRATED YOUTH, THEY OFFER FOOD, ALCOHOL, CIGARETTES - AND ENTERTAINMENT**



**SO, IN RETURN FOR THESE MANY YOUNG PEOPLE JOIN THE GANGS THAT PROTECT THE SHEBEENS**



**MORE POLICE WILL NOT STOP GANGS! WE NEED...**

**BETTER HOUSES...**

**BETTER SCHOOLS...**

**AND BETTER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES...**

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 STRICTLY HALAAL

## Parents protest over double shifts

RESIDENTS in Mitchell's Plain are angry because double shift school sessions have been introduced in the township.

At the moment the schools affected are No 11 Primary in Westridge and Highlands Primary in Woodlands.

Residents fear that once the practice has started it will spread to all the schools in the area.

No. 11 opened this year with an enrolment of 2 241 and it was decided to remove the Std threes and fours to Highlands (the children are being bussed). It was also decided to in-

roduce double sessions for the Sub-A's and B's.

Said one angry mother: "They didn't even do us the courtesy of informing us."

"I was busy bathing my son the other night when he mentioned that he had been told not to come to school the next morning and that he should attend the afternoon session."

"I was horrified and went with him to the school in the morning, but was told to bring him back in the afternoon."

"I've had to give up my job. The other children are all at school and there is no-

body at home to see that my youngest gets to school at 12 o'clock."

A number of other mothers are in a similar position - having had to give up their jobs to cope with the double session crisis.

"The only way a family can afford to live reasonably decently in Mitchell's Plain," said a resident, "is if both parents work."

One of the most upset mothers had four children going to the same school at the same time last year.

"Now I've got a son at morning session in Sub B and a daughter in afternoon session in

Sub A at one school, a son in Std 3 (morning session) and a daughter in Std 4 (afternoon session) at another school".

Parents have already started organising in Westridge around the issue and a number of house meetings have been held.

"We must stand firm on this issue," a speaker at one of the meetings said. "We did not ask to be dumped all the way out here."

"The least we can expect is that there should be enough school accommodation for all the children."

"They should have

seen to that before they forced people to move out here.

"The double session system will deprive our children of what little chance they have in life."

"In the first place their school day is now reduced to four hours. In the second how do they expect the children in the second session starting at 12 to learn anything? They will be tired after playing all morning."

"How about the teacher - battling to cope with more than 100 children in a day!"

"The time has come when we must say - enough! No more!"

**UNISEX HAIRSTYLISTS**

WE ARE PROUD TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH  
 'GRASSROOTS'

**BARCLAY CENTRE 2nd FLOOR**  
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## comment

## How grassroots is GRASSROOTS

GRASSROOTS community newsletter is now a year old. We turned ONE last month.

January 1981 was exactly a year since a number of communities endorsed the idea of beginning a grassroots newsletter in the Western Cape.

It was a year since community people started writing their own reports of activities in their areas as they saw and felt about it.

It was a year since community organisations started distributing the paper in their areas, using it at the same time to go on membership drives and get residents to talk about issues highlighted in the paper.

With the strong emphasis placed on community involvement, it was fitting that we celebrated our first anniversary by taking stock at a special meeting in Langa of exactly how Grassroots really was.

In other words, how true we were to our claim of being a community newsletter.

The Langa meeting itself was not the last of our stocktaking sessions but the beginning. To get as much feedback as possible, we also plan to do a scientific survey and organise a special workshop at which community and worker organisations will be able to map the newsletter's future.

In fact, copies of the survey have been printed on Page 15 in this edition. We appeal to you to complete it and return it to us as soon as possible.

The workshop will be held on Saturday March 21 and organisations wishing to attend should please contact our office.

Grassroots itself has never claimed to be fully representative of the community. To do so would be to bluff ourselves.

## Community problems

We work closely with the community and inevitably the problems found in the community will be the problems found in Grassroots.

Communities write our stories and distribute the paper. In areas where there are strong organisations, the paper is well circulated and we have many stories of activities there.

But in the areas where organisations are not so strong, we are poorly distributed and have few

stories, if any.

Areas with strong civic bodies are, therefore, well represented on Grassroots' general body. Others are not. It is a reflection of the state of the community.

We are not making excuses. Full community participation remains a priority and concerted efforts are being made to strengthen our community bonds so that we can more accurately reflect the interests of the people.

Since January this year, we already succeeded in getting several more communities involved in the news gathering process. Every week new contacts are made and new groups are invited to join Grassroots.

But does Grassroots have community support? Whatever people may think about the newsletter, we feel they can't deny that the paper has broad support.

For a project like Grassroots to function effectively, it has to have community support. And the fact that we have continued for a year is ample proof of the support we have. If we didn't have this backing, we would have folded up long ago.

## Stronger than ever

But we didn't and this is largely due to the foundations we laid before starting the paper. The newsletter idea was put to a number of community organisations. That groundwork bore the fruits we see today.

Not even attempts by the state to cripple the newsletter by banning our organiser, Mr Johnny Issel, succeeded and we are now as strong as ever.

It also can't be denied that Grassroots has proved to be very different from big daily and weekly papers.

No executive behind an oak desk decides what the issues are in the community and sends a reporter to 'cover' them.

Our stories are written by community people themselves. In some cases this is done in group sessions, an idea we hope to expand.

At big commercial papers, decisions are taken at the top and filtered to the bottom. At Grassroots all decisions are taken democratically by all community people and organisations involved in the project.

## Truly alternative

This is why we can claim truly to be an alternative and independent paper. Alternative media of a local nature is about relating a paper to the community and its needs and moving control into the hands of the community. This is Grassroots.

Grassroots emergence stimulated the growth of other alternative media in the Western Cape. Smaller newsletters sprang up in areas like Hanover Park and Lotus River and, together with hosts of illustrated pamphlets produced last year, put the Western Cape in the lead in the alternative media field.

The most significant endorsement Grassroots received as an alternative was when the students decided to use it in their awareness programmes during the schools boycott.

That was but one of the paper's gains. But more important is that we survived for a year and managed to bring out six editions.

And more significant is that different communities came face-to-face around the table for the first time and were able to share problems and exchange ideas of happenings in their areas. Grassroots thus succeeded to some extent to co-ordinate activities in the different areas.

We also managed during our first year to raise our own resources.

The newsletter also generated from its revenue sources of advertising, sales and subscriptions an impressive amount of over R11 000, something which we even didn't think would be possible.

Now, self-sufficiency, which we once believed to be a pipe-dream, has suddenly come within our reach. But it takes hard work and we need the support of everyone, especially community and work organisations, and advertisers.

## LETTERS

## 'Congratulations GRASSROOTS but ...'

CONGRATULATIONS on your fantastic newsletter. It is informative and serves the needs of our community. It has gone beyond a mere civic level and linked up with national issues.

I'm referring especially to the Dec. 1980 edition that spoke of the work of the Durban Housing Action Committee and the struggles of our workers in the Eastern Cape. This is very good.

Your comment in the Same Dec. 1980 issue is also quite good. It spoke of the many outstanding struggles of our people in 1980 - the workers at Ford; Johannesburg Municipal workers; Durban Housing Action Committee; meat industry strike and the massive community response; the students struggle against 'gutter education'; bus boycott etc.

What I find most alarming is the fact that

there was this deafening silence about the Free Mandela Campaign and the many actions of the guerrillas. There was Moroka, Booyens, Soekmeaar, Sasol etc. and yet you gloss over these acts as if it were non-events. Is there any reason for this? Did you think it was not worth mentioning? After all these were events of 1980 and your article is entitled 'People on the march'.

All this I find extremely disturbing. Please, please reply.

Johnny January  
Manenburg

The article referred to by our correspondent was, in fact, the newsletter's editorial comment - not a summary of the main news events of 1980.

The subject of the editorial was to highlight and comment on



the major achievements in the related fields of community and labour organisation.

The Free Mandela Campaign and the attack on Soekmeaar - while themselves highly significant events - did not fall into the categories under discussion in the editorial.

News Gathering  
Committee

## Dr wants advice from readers

I am writing to you because I want some of your readers to give me some advice.

I work as a doctor in the outpatients clinic of one of our hospitals in Cape Town. One of the commonest illnesses that I see is high blood pressure (hypertension or "high blood").

In the time that I have worked in the hos-

pital, I have noticed some things about my patients.

The first thing is that many people stop coming back to the clinic. This often happens after only two or three months.

The second thing I have noticed is that almost the only people who keep coming back for a long time are

women who work at home. It seems that workers in factories are not coming back to the hospital.

I want to know why this is so. Why are these people not coming back to hospital?

High blood pressure does not go away. A person with high blood pressure will always

need treatment.

Please, could your readers give me some advice? Please could they write in to Grassroots and tell me about the problems that they have had getting treatment after they have been told that they have high blood pressure?



IF nothing else, the South African government is good at playing with words.

They've got the knack of putting new meaning to old words and old meaning to new words.

It all started when a couple of Dutchmen decided to bring 'civilisation' to the Cape. "Civilisation" would mean breaking up people's traditional way of living and bringing to them the good Western Culture. It was all for a good cause, though. Civilisation is a good cause, isn't it.

It was not too long before people were getting into the swing of something called free enterprise. Free enterprise being the freedom of some people to make much more money than the majority of the people, and the freedom of the majority of the people to be exploited by a small part of the people.

It's confusing isn't it, but then someone did write once, "It's a long, confusing walk to freedom!"

After years of some people being more fortunate than others, Dr Hendrik Verwoerd (bless his white soul) decided that South Africa could not have a system without a name, and apartheid was christened.

There were reports that apartheid was

# Talking turkey

by Gadfly

dying (some reports even said apartheid was dead: what a sad day that would have been, but as they say "onkruid vergaan nie"). But medication in the form of a few mass removals and reinforcement of laws like the Group Areas Act and the liquor laws saw apartheid making a speedy recovery.

## Is apartheid alive?

At the moment apartheid is alive and well and sticking out like a sore thumb all over South Africa.

If there is one thing the SA government does not like to do it is to offend people.

"People must never think we want to offend them, even if we do" they say.

This kind of thinking has seen them changing "offensive" names with monotonous regularity.

The darkest of dark people in South Africa were first called "natives" until the lighter skinned realised "hey we are all natives let's call them bantu." Later they realised 'hey we are all people' (bantu is Zulu for people).

Someone came up with the idea of calling them "plurals", maybe because their numbers are many times the plural of the whites. This idea did not help either, so somebody suggested "we don't call them anything. We call on their co-operation to work towards their development" and olé, the Department of Co-operation and Development was born.

Development is also a word that has got an original meaning in South Africa. The Department of Community Development must be the only department in the world which would uproot a whole established

community, scatter them in many different communities, and all in the name of developing the community. Well, you can't say they are not original.

Still on the offensive bit: when it was decided not to call the darkest of the dark people anything, the decision also filtered through to other departments.

The Departments of Coloured and Indian Affairs (the Indians used to be called Asiatics, but it was realised that most of them had never been to Asia) became the Department.

oops, sorry . . .

Does it mean that all internals and other people are foreigners or externals.

Meanwhile, good old apartheid also got a few new names. Segregation was not really approved, but it seems like separate under . . . oops, sorry, separate development was much more acceptable.

There should be a prize for South Africa for creative vocabulary.

And who says Afrikaners don't know English.

# Soweto housing struggles

IN the aftermath of the inrest of 1976 and the banning of organisations, the need was expressed for a "civic body representative of every Black man's aspirations in the township." In this issue of Grassroots, we focus on the Soweto Civic Association which has spearheaded and co-ordinated major struggles on a number of fronts. More recently, the rent increases.

The mood in Soweto in June 1977 was militant and demanding. The collapse of the government-initiated Urban Bantu Councils which were responsible for the administration of the township, was due to the protest by the people. At this time a meeting was held which was attended by representatives from various committees and organisations in Soweto to discuss the formation of an organisation. The Committee of 10 emerged in this climate with the potential of becoming an active force in the local politics of Soweto.

Initially, the Committee of 10 was slow in organising the civic body it hoped to achieve. In September 1979, the Soweto Civic Association (SCA) was launched at a conference. At first, it was to be the interim executive until elections were held. At that time it was proposed that a branch be formed in each of the 35 suburbs of Soweto which would make up the SCA. To date, twenty-two branches have been formed, some being better organised than others.

The aim was to have a body which would take up

local community issues. The SCA has taken up issues such as the increases in busfares, rent increases and the boycott of the Community Council elections. It was a victory for the people when only 6% of the residents of Soweto participated in the Community Council Elections, while the majority expressed their rejection of government created institutions.

Housing is one of the major problems of the people of Soweto. Some of the problems are poor housing conditions, a lack of housing, overcrowding and at this point, proposed rent increases of between 300 and 500%. The rent increases will be a burden that 72% of the people of Soweto will not be able to bear. This has been the centre of much controversy and the basis for community action over the past few months.

In August 1979, Thebehali, the chairman of the community council, which was rejected by the people, announced a rent increase which would be implemented in three stages over a period of nine months. At that time the average rental was R19,50 per month and would rise to R36,62 per month.

As it is government policy that Urban African townships should generate its own funds in order to be financially self-sufficient, the rent increases were seen as an attempt by the community councils to raise much needed funds for the administration of the township.

Rent in Soweto covers house rent, site rent, service



"we boycott the rent increases"

charges and a schools levy. In addition to this, a loan was made to install electricity in Soweto. The residents will have to pay for an electricity levy so that the community council can repay this loan plus interest to the authorities. The people will have to bear the burden.

There was great outcry against the proposed increases. Mass meetings were held throughout Soweto which was initiated by the SCA and other organisations in the

township. These meetings were attended by between 1 000 and 2 000 residents who expressed opposition to the increases. Thousands voiced their opposition to the increases leading to demonstrations which coincided with the protest against the community council "freedom of the city" award to Piet Koornhof.

The mood of the people was defiant and they resolved not to pay the rent increases.

A survey which was conducted in August/September, showed that not more than 1% had paid the increases. The authorities did not evict people, but where this was happening, the people were asked not to move into houses of residents who were evicted for refusing to pay the increases. Residents were also asked to report to their local SCA branch if the officials refused to accept payment of the old rent. The cry coming from the people was 'Asinayo' — we have no money; "No rent hikes for kennel houses" and "We boycott the rent increases".

The people stood firm on this decision while the SCA brought an interdict against the Department of Co-operation and Development, the West Rand Administration Board and the Community Council to stop the increases.

There was opposition to the decision to take the matter to court. Some felt that the mood of the people was being misread and that a total boycott of rent increases would be a more effective form of action. The view was also expressed that court actions are long and drawn out and that it takes the organisation out of the hands of the people. Legal action does not directly involve the vast majority of the people in an active way.

The view of the SCA was that the branches were not strong enough organisationally and it was doubted whether the people could sustain such action on a long term basis. There was also the real fear of evictions. In spite

of opposition, the different groupings in Soweto came to support the court action.

After a long legal battle, the SCA has lost the case, and there is talk of appealing against the decision. A few weeks ago, the SCA called off the boycott against rent increases after four months because of the fear of evictions.

## struggle continues

The struggle around the rent increases is by no means seen as a defeat, in fact many gains were made. Many of the branches of the association have been consolidated, greater awareness has been achieved through united mass action.

The need still exists for much stronger grassroots organisation and democratic participation in the branches of the association. Some are better organised than others. The view has also been expressed that the danger exists that the middle-class leadership in the association may tend to act on "behalf of the masses" rather than promoting active participation of the working class in its own organisation. The Soweto Civic Association like many other civic associations across the country should not only issue press statements about the suffering of the people, but should actively assist in organising the people.

In looking to the future, the SCA has already taken up the issue of compulsory education. Programs for youth and community development are on the agenda with the view of promoting community self-reliance. On the organisation around housing issues and rents, Grassroots was told that "the struggle continues".

From page 1

## Mitchell's Plain lights petition

distinctive newsletters are produced and distributed at bus stops and at stations.

\* Bumper stickers are also being sold for 10c at the shopping centres by the youth and a humorous cartoon slide is being shown at a local cinema.

\* A survey is being conducted to gather factual information on electricity and related

problems facing the people.

\* A local doctor and a church have given donations towards the campaign.

\* A group of women from Woodlands recently held a cake sale for additional funds.

\* A mass meeting was held at the Anglican Church Hall in Westridge on the 17th

December 1980. At the meeting the campaign was explained, the due date of the 7th was reaffirmed and the petition campaign was endorsed.

\* To date 20 house meetings have been held throughout Mitchell's Plain. At these meetings residents are told about the campaign and all questions about the E.P.C. are answered. It is also shown how

people can get involved in petitioning, fund-raising, etc.

\* Information is also gathered about grievances such as the R20 deposit, opening pay offices on Saturdays and faulty electricity boxes, which will be included in the memorandum accompanying the signed petitions.

These meetings have been very successful and many other prob-

lems were raised. Many have come forward to assist in the many facets of the campaign — housewives, workers and students.

The house meetings which are conducted as a total group effort will lead to a mass meeting to be announced shortly.

From page 1

## Lavis plea

The committee, together with the residents conducted a survey to obtain facts and figures to back their case. The local authority indicated to the committee that the people would have to pay R50 installation fee to Escom. The survey also showed that most people (98%) were prepared to pay this fee and that electricity would be cheaper than fuel. Armed with this information, the committee feels that

they will be in a better position to fight their case with the local authority.

Public meetings are being planned in the other areas in Bishop Lavis to gain broader support and involvement. Through this campaign the people have come to realise the need for a formal organisation representing the six different areas in Bishop Lavis in order to work on issues affecting the community.



## People bear burden

AT a recent mass meeting on the problem of increased rents, a resident said that "We are sent from one official to the next when we complain about housing problems. Nobody seems to know who is responsible for what".

In this story, Grassroots looks at the question of who is responsible for housing, and where does the money come from.

In the African areas, the Bantu Administration Boards (BAAB) are responsible for housing, services, facilities such as sports, and administration of the townships. It is the government's plan that these boards must get their own money to provide the necessary services. But, because the townships do not have big businesses, raising their own money is a problem. They therefore depend on the income from rents paid by the people and income from the sale of beer and liquor. Beer and liquor sales make up the highest income of the boards.

This has angered many people, they have asked "Why should we pay for our services out of our pockets? Must we drink more so that our children can have schools and sports grounds and we can have more houses?" They said that it is the government's responsibility to provide housing, "Why must we bear the burden?"

During the unrest in 1976, the

people rejected this system by burning the beer halls and liquor outlets. This has affected the income of BAAB. The increase in rents is an attempt by BAAB to raise money. At the moment, all over the country, the people are resisting these increases in places such as, Soweto, Zwile and others.

In the "Coloured" areas, the City Council and the Divisional Council are responsible for housing and services. They get a loan from the government through the National Housing Fund at an interest. This interest must be repaid by the City Council and the Divisional Council. They raise the money from the people who pay rents and service charges. Here again, the people have to pay and not the government. They have to bear the greatest burden.

At mass meetings during the boycotts last year, thousands of people rejected management committees and community councils. These bodies work together with City Council, Divisional Council and BAAB in the provision of housing and services.

The people have rejected them because they do not represent the real interests of the people and because they have been created by the government to fulfil the aims of Apartheid. A resident asked, "How can they talk to the government about our problems when they are supervised and controlled by the Council and BAAB?"

## Trapped in Valhalla

THE first residents moved into Valhalla Park in 1977. These people were moved from squatter areas around Cape Town. For many people, moving into a house means hope of a better life.

Very soon this hope turned sour.

Rents were increased soon after the people settled into the houses. This meant immediate problems because in the squatter areas, the rents were very low. The big jump in rents meant changes in people's life styles.

The houses which were provided were too small for most families.

A large number of families experience chest problems as a result of dampness in the houses. This dampness is caused by gutters not having been provided, walls are not plastered and low quality ash bricks were used. These problems have occurred because the Council did not spend enough money to cover the basics when they built the houses.

"The dampness is so bad that all our ceilings have turned black" said Mrs Julia. I spend all my time at the TB clinic with my two children.

The Council tried to save money by using the cheapest building materials. Even though the houses are only three years old, they are

already showing signs of falling apart. Residents complain about walls cracking, door frames coming loose and water seeping into the houses when it rains. The people have to pay for these repairs which is an added burden.

When the "Goop" started moving people from Bloemhof Flats, Valhalla Park was extended to house these people. By the end of 1980, Valhalla Park had tripled in size. This meant that more services were needed in the area. Essential services such as shops, clinics, schools, libraries, telephones and community halls have never existed in the area. This led to increased travelling costs for people to reach schools, clinics and shops.

The position in Valhalla Park was summed up by a resident who said "I am trapped. The rents are high, the houses are bad and the condition of the houses is poor. When I lived in a shack, I dreamt of living in a house. Conditions in the squatter camps were not as bad as this. My shack has been demolished. I have nowhere else to go, that is why I am forced to stay here."

The problems of the people of Valhalla Park are no different to the housing problems of the people of Soweto, Chatsworth or Manenberg.

## Hardships of the Group Areas Act

OVER the past twenty years the government has moved millions of people from areas where they have lived happily to townships on the outskirts of the cities. Closely knit communities such as, District Six, Claremont and others have been uprooted. The people have been dumped in areas far from their places of work, neighbours and close friends.

This is so because of the Group Areas Act which has forced each group of people to live and work with its own "race group". Not only has it brought great hardships for many people, but it is also the cause of the great housing shortage. The City Council also has a waiting list of 20 000 families, some waiting for houses since 1969.

The Council is giving priority to those people affected by Group Areas removals and squatters. The rest of the people will have to wait. A single mother with eight children has moved from pillar to post while waiting nine years for a house.

"My children are living with relatives all over Cape Town and I hardly get a chance to see them. Because we do not have a house, my children are very sickly and my eldest son is now mixing with bad company". This mother has spent a lot of her time at City Council about her housing problem. "The only thing that they tell me is that I must wait. I can't wait anymore."

It is government policy that no more

housing will be provided for African families in the Western Cape, except the new Crossroads township.

The Government has reserved the Western Cape to "Coloureds" and is trying to control the inflow of Africans into the area. Not only has this resulted in a large squatter problem, but it has had the effect of dividing and controlling the people.

A resident said: "We have lived and worked here all our lives, but because of some law we are told that we cannot get houses. Where must we go to?"

The families who have been moved to the townships feel bitter - they claim that they have lost everything that was important in

their lives and that the "Goop" is responsible. In the townships, people are faced with high rents, electricity bills, extra transport costs which makes it hard to survive on their wages.

A Mitchell's Plain resident said that he did not qualify for rented housing when they were moved, and was forced to buy a house in Mitchell's Plain which he cannot afford.

"With the rising prices, we fear that we may be evicted in the end" he said.

It has cost the government R55 000 000 to change District Six into a "whites only" area. "Could this money not have been used to provide housing for the thousands of people on waiting lists all over South Africa?" Grassroots was told.

# Housing: why problem



THE right to shelter is a basic human right. A house is necessary for a happy and stable family life. In our country, housing is a privilege rather than the right of the majority of the people. The lack of housing and poor housing conditions are one of the major problems facing the people.

The Group Areas Act has forced many people to live and work in separate areas set aside for the different "racial groups". It has brought great suffering to the people and is one of the causes of the housing shortage. This is part of the government's plan to divide and rule the people's lives. The demand for housing has increased as more and more people are moving from the country areas to the cities because there are no jobs. The government, in providing housing, has not kept up with the growing need for housing.

Most working people spend a large portion of their wages on rent and other basic necessities to stay alive and healthy. The bosses need a healthy and stable labour force who can work for them so that they can reap the benefits and pay the workers just enough to keep alive. The state helps the bosses by subsidising housing or by providing it directly.

Low cost housing is provided to keep rents low so that working people can just about afford it. If better housing is provided, then the workers will have to pay higher rents. This means that the bosses will have to pay the workers higher wages. In this way, the state aids the bosses to ensure that the workers are on the job. Some townships, such as, Ravenhall, Atlantis and many others have been planned with industrial areas around them which is a ready supply of cheap labour to the bosses.

Over the years many struggles have been fought by the people around housing problems. The state has reacted to the struggles of the people by controlling them in the townships through the Group Areas Act and by dividing them. The new plan of the government is to build up a Black middle class by giving some more benefits than others. This is another way of breaking the unity of the people. The bosses through organisations such as the Urban Foundation have stepped in and helped their workers with housing such as the self-help housing schemes. It is clear that the greatest burden has to be borne by most working people, while the state and the bosses protect their interest.



## How the communities organised

### Zwile rents strike

SINCE the rent increases last year, the residents of Zwile in Fort Elizabeth refused to pay increases until the rents were lowered.

Because of the united action of the people, the rents were lowered after eight months from R36,38 to R33,11 a month. The residents were satisfied with this decrease and continued their strike. They felt that rents should be lowered to R18 a month.

In June last year, Zwile Residents Association took legal action but lost the case.

These were however, some gains for those residents who are living in the new sections

of Zwile. Their rents were lowered because of a legal technicality.

Because of the court action, the problems of the people were widely publicised. The people claim that their houses are unfit for human beings to live in. There are no ceilings or floors.

In Soweto last year, the people refused to pay the increases for four months. Although there has now been a decision to pay the increases because of threats of evictions, the people stood united for all this time. The cry from Soweto has been "we boycott the rent increases".

## The people's cry - Siyahhlala

BY 1977, it was estimated that there were roughly 200 000 squatter families living in camps all over Cape Town. Today there is very little left of the closely knit squatter communities.

The Illegal Squatting Amendment Act made squatting illegal. This was followed by mass demolitions in 1977 and 1978. The squatter communities were thrown into a state of crisis. Many outsiders stepped in at this point to help organise what were believed to be "disorganised" communities". This was a false picture as the squatter communities were fairly well organised. Because of the crisis of evictions many problems were experienced. It is believed that the organisation was taken out of the hands of the people.

Despite the many problems, there are other important lessons to be learnt from the way in which the people organised themselves before the crisis of evictions. In camps such as Modderdam, Uitenhage, Crossroads and others, the people organised their own committees. The members were elected democratically. At open air mass community meetings, decisions were taken after long and tiring discussions. Because of the poor conditions in the camps and the lack of services, the residents organised community schools for their children and other necessary services such as shops. As there was no garbage removal system, the people laid down rules such as, every household must have a dust pit and a toilet to avoid health problems.

The spirit in these communities was one of working together on common problems. One resident said "Life here is very hard, we work together to make life a little bearable."

The cry of the people living in the squatter camps was "Siyahlala - We are Staying". The people refused to move because they wanted housing and the right to live where they wanted to. They resisted evictions through united action. Because

of the demolitions, people generally think of the squatters with sadness and the belief that their struggle was in vain.

The movement to house some of the people in the new Crossroads township is seen as a means to divide the people by giving some housing and not others. The fact is that housing is being provided for these families while the government has consistently refused to do so in the past. This is a major victory for the people of Crossroads. Let us not forget the united action of the people, the democratic organisation and the community programs which they organised to serve their interests.

COMMUNITIES all over the country have at various times over the years, and in different ways, voiced their dissatisfaction with the inferior housing provided by the state.

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Where these methods have failed, the people have taken to the street to make their voices heard. Woodlands demonstration last year against the rent increases is a significant case of how the people have won.

In order to bring local communities together to speak with one voice, an umbrella body consisting of representatives of different community organisations was formed, the Cape Area Housing Action Committee. This body prepared itself to organise around the problems of rents and housing.

Many problems have been experienced in the struggle around housing and, more recently, the new rents. Some communities are better organised than others. The result is that the stronger community organisations are able to voice their grievances more strongly than others. The Council's strategy to give some rent increases and not others, has been an attempt to di-

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## People bear burden

AT a recent mass meeting on the problem of increased rents, a resident said that "We are sent from one official to the next when we complain about housing problems. Nobody seems to know who is responsible for what".

In this story, Grassroots looks at the question of who is responsible for housing, and where does the money come from.

In the African areas, the Bantu Administration Boards (BAAB) are responsible for housing, services, facilities such as sports, and administration of the townships. It is the government's plan that these boards must get their own money to provide the necessary services. But, because the townships do not have big businesses, raising their own money is a problem. They therefore depend on the income from rents paid by the people and income from the sale of beer and liquor. Beer and liquor sales make up the highest income of the boards.

This has angered many people, they have asked "Why should we pay for our services out of our pockets? Must we drink more so that our children can have schools and sports grounds and we can have more houses?" They said that it is the government's responsibility to provide housing, "Why must we bear the burden?"

During the unrest in 1976, the

people rejected this system by burning the beer halls and liquor outlets. This has affected the income of BAAB. The increase in rents is an attempt by BAAB to raise money. At the moment, all over the country, the people are resisting these increases in places such as, Soweto, Zwile and others.

In the "Coloured" areas, the City Council and the Divisional Council are responsible for housing and services. They get a loan from the government through the National Housing Fund at an interest. This interest must be repaid by the City Council and the Divisional Council. They raise the money from the people who pay rents and service charges. Here again, the people have to pay and not the government. They have to bear the greatest burden.

At mass meetings during the boycotts last year, thousands of people rejected management committees and community councils. These bodies work together with City Council, Divisional Council and BAAB in the provision of housing and services.

The people have rejected them because they do not represent the real interests of the people and because they have been created by the government to fulfill the aims of Apartheid. A resident asked, "How can they talk to the government about our problems when they are supervised and controlled by the Council and BAAB?"

## Trapped in Valhalla

THE first residents moved into Valhalla Park in 1977. These people were moved from squatter areas around Cape Town. For many people, moving into a house means hope of a better life.

Very soon this hope turned sour. Rents were increased soon after the people settled into the houses. This meant immediate problems because in the squatter areas, the rents were very low. The big jump in rents meant changes in people's life styles.

The houses which were provided were too small for most families. A large number of families experience chest problems as a result of dampness in the houses. This dampness is caused by gutters not having been provided, walls are not plastered and low quality ash bricks were used. These problems have occurred because the Council did not spend enough money to cover the basics when they built the houses.

"The dampness is so bad that all our ceilings have turned black" said Mrs Julia. I spend all my time at the TB clinic with my two children."

The Council tried to save money by using the cheapest building materials. Even though the houses are only three years old, they are

already showing signs of falling apart. Residents complain about walls cracking, door frames coming loose and water seeping into the houses when it rains. The people have to pay for these repairs which is an added burden.

When the "Goop" started moving people from Bloemhof Flats, Valhalla Park was extended to house these people. By the end of 1980, Valhalla Park had tripled in size. This meant that more services were needed in the area. Essential services such as shops, clinics, schools, libraries, telephones and community halls have never existed in the area. This led to increased travelling costs for people to reach schools, clinics and shops.

The position in Valhalla Park was summed up by a resident who said "I am trapped. The rents are high, the houses are bad and the condition of the houses is poor. When I lived in a shack, I dreamt of living in a house. Conditions in the squatter camps were not as bad as this. My shack has been demolished. I have nowhere else to go, that is why I am forced to stay here."

The problems of the people of Valhalla Park are no different to the housing problems of the people of Soweto, Chatsworth or Manenberg.

## Hardships of the Group Areas Act

OVER the past twenty years the government has moved millions of people from areas where they have lived happily to townships on the outskirts of the cities. Closely knit communities such as, District Six, Claremont and others have been uprooted. The people have been dumped in areas far from their places of work, neighbours and close friends.

This is so because of the Group Areas Act which has forced each group of people to live and work with its own "race group". Not only has it brought great hardships for many people, but it is also the cause of the great housing shortage. The City Council also has a waiting list of 20 000 families, some waiting for houses since 1969.

The Council is giving priority to those people affected by Group Areas removals and squatters. The rest of the people will have to wait. A single mother with eight children has moved from pillar to post while waiting nine years for a house.

"My children are living with relatives all over Cape Town and I hardly get a chance to see them. Because we do not have a house, my children are very sickly and my eldest son is now mixing with bad company". This mother has spent a lot of her fare to City Council about her housing problem. "The only thing that they tell me is that I must wait. I can't wait anymore."

It is government policy that no more

housing will be provided for African families in the Western Cape, except the new Crossroads township.

The Government has reserved the Western Cape to "Coloureds" and is trying to control the inflow of Africans into the area. Not only has this resulted in a huge squatter problem, but it has had the effect of dividing and controlling the people.

A resident said: "We have lived and worked here all our lives, but because of some law we are told that we cannot get houses. Where must we go to?"

The families who have been moved to the townships feel bitter - they claim that they have lost everything that was important in

their lives and that the "Goop" is responsible. In the townships, people are faced with high rents, electricity bills, extra transport costs which makes it hard to survive on their wages.

A Mitchell's Plain resident said that he did not qualify for rented housing when they were moved, and was forced to buy a house in Mitchell's Plain which he cannot afford.

"With the rising prices, we fear that we may be evicted in the end" he said.

It has cost the government R55 000 000 to change District Six into a "whites only" area. "Could this money not have been used to provide housing for the thousands of people on waiting lists all over South Africa?" Grassroots was told.



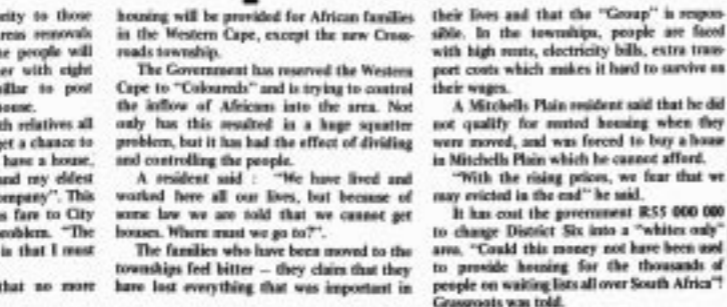
THE right to shelter is a basic human right. A house is necessary for a happy and stable family life. In our country, housing is a privilege rather than the right of the majority of the people. The lack of housing and poor housing conditions are one of the major problems facing the people.

The Group Areas Act has forced many people to live and work in separate areas set aside for the different "racial groups". It has brought great suffering to the people and is one of the causes of the housing shortage. This is part of the government's plan to divide and rule the people's lives. The demand for housing has increased as more and more people are moving from the country areas to the cities because there are no jobs. The government, in providing housing, has not kept up with the growing need for housing.

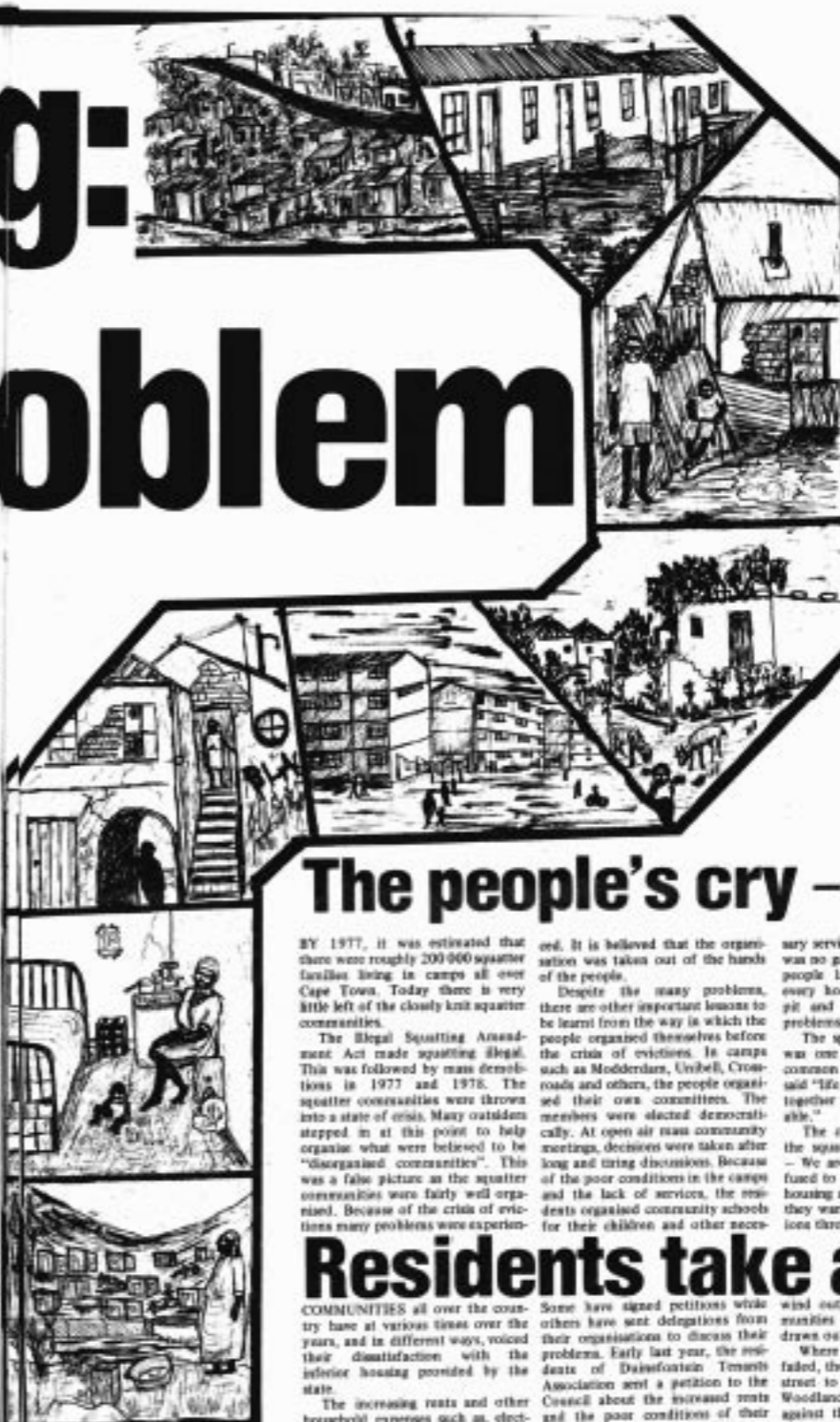
Most working people spend a large portion of their wages on rent and other basic necessities to stay alive and healthy. The bosses need a healthy and stable labour force who can work for them so that they can reap the benefits and pay the workers just enough to keep alive. The state helps the bosses by subsidising housing or by providing it directly.

Low cost housing is provided to keep rents low so that working people can just about afford it. If better housing is provided, then the workers will have to pay higher rents. This means that the bosses will have to pay the workers higher wages. In this way, the state aids the bosses to ensure that the workers are on the job. Some townships, such as, Ravenhall, Atlantis and many others have been planned with industrial areas around them which is a ready supply of cheap labour to the bosses.

Over the years many struggles have been fought by the people around housing problems. The state has reacted to the struggles of the people by controlling them in the townships through the Group Areas Act and by dividing them. The new plan of the government is to build up a Black middle class by giving some more benefits than others. This is another way of breaking the unity of the people. The bosses through organisations such as the Urban Foundation have stepped in and helped their workers with housing such as the self-help housing schemes. It is clear that the greatest burden has to be borne by most working people, while the state and the bosses protect their interest.



# Housing: why problem



## How the communities organised

### Zwile rents strike

SINCE the rent increases last year, the residents of Zwile in Fort Elizabeth refused to pay increases until the rents were lowered.

Because of the united action of the people, the rents were lowered after eight months from R36,38 to R33,11 a month. The residents were satisfied with this decrease and continued their strike. They felt that rents should be lowered to R18 a month.

In June last year, Zwile Residents Association took legal action but lost the case.

There were however, some gains for those residents who are living in the new section

of Zwile. Their rents were lowered because of a legal technicality.

Because of the court action, the problems of the people were widely publicised. The people claim that their houses are unfit for human beings to live in. There are no ceilings or floors.

In Soweto last year, the people refused to pay the increases for four months. Although there has now been a decision to pay the increases because of threats of evictions, the people stood united for all this time. The cry from Soweto has been "we boycott the rent increases".

## The people's cry - Siyahhlala

BY 1977, it was estimated that there were roughly 200 000 squatter families living in camps all over Cape Town. Today there is very little left of the closely knit squatter communities.

The Illegal Squatting Amendment Act made squatting illegal. This was followed by mass demolitions in 1977 and 1978. The squatter communities were thrown into a state of crisis. Many outsiders stepped in at this point to help organise what were believed to be "disorganised" communities". This was a false picture as the squatter communities were fairly well organised. Because of the crisis of evictions many problems were experienced. It is believed that the organisation was taken out of the hands of the people.

Despite the many problems, there are other important lessons to be learnt from the way in which the people organised themselves before the crisis of evictions. In camps such as Modderfontein, Uitenhage, Crossroads and others, the people organised their own committees. The members were elected democratically. At open air mass community meetings, decisions were taken after long and tiring discussions. Because of the poor conditions in the camps and the lack of services, the residents organised community schools for their children and other necessary services such as shops. As there was no garbage removal system, the people laid down rules such as, every household must have a dust pit and a toilet to avoid health problems.

The spirit in these communities was one of working together on common problems. One resident said "Life here is very hard, we work together to make life a little bearable."

The cry of the people living in the squatter camps was "Siyahlala - We are Staying". The people refused to move because they wanted housing and the right to live where they wanted to. They resisted evictions through united action. Because

of the demolitions, people generally think of the squatters with sadness and the belief that their struggle was in vain.

The movement to house some of the people in the new Crossroads township is seen as a means to divide the people by giving some housing and not others. The fact is that housing is being provided for these families while the government has consistently refused to do so in the past. This is a major victory for the people of Crossroads. Let us not forget the united action of the people, the democratic organisation and the community programs which they organised to serve their interests.

COMMUNITIES all over the country have at various times over the years, and in different ways, voiced their dissatisfaction with the inferior housing provided by the state.

The increasing rents and other household expenses such as, electricity, water and repairs have eaten deep into the small pay packets of the working poor. People all over the country have been forced into action. In some cases many of the actions were unorganised, arising from the preting housing conditions. While others were highly organised through the people's democratic community organisations.

Some have signed petitions while others have sent delegations from their organisations to discuss their problems. Early last year, the residents of Dainiesfontein Tenants Association sent a petition to the Council about the increased rents and the poor conditions of their houses. The petition enabled them to reach many residents in the area and to win support for their association.

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WRITERS CORNER

# THE CITY OF THE FUTURE

SEE my Daddy. He is the head of our house. My Mommy says so. Every morning he gets up at five o'clock to go to work.

See my Mommy. She stays at home to rear the children. She cooks and teaches us good manners. See my brother and sister. We have a smaller family than most. We have a

bigger future.

See our new house. It is in the new city called Mitchell's Plain. My Daddy agrees with the Council that there is a bright future for us children here.

Our house has three small bedrooms, a lounge with enough room for Mommy to do the cooking in it as well. We even have a front

garden. It is crowded with flowers. Daddy planted a dozen marigolds in it. We water the garden every night. Daddy reads the council's newsletter which appeals to us to help make Mitchell's Plain a beautiful place.

See our yard. There is even room for Mommy to hang up the washing.

See Daddy come home from work. He is very tired. He is our bread-winner.

See the last week of the month. Daddy takes his pay packet and sends it to the City Treasurer to pay the rent. We eat what is left of last week's food.

See the beautiful Town Centre. Mommy buys food at the super-

markets every week. She gives Daddy's pay packet to the cashier to pay for the groceries.

See the bills - electricity, water, rent rates.

See the newsletter that comes with them. It tells us all about the Wonderful City of the Future. It encourages us to make a joint effort to build the City by the Sea.

Daddy has a terrible headache. We children are all very quiet.

See the months go by.

See the Council Van.

See the men jump out and come into our house. They grab our furniture and put in on the pavements because our garden is too small.

Some of our things

are accidentally broken by the men.

See Daddy sigh.

See Mommy cry.

See the sun come up over the City of the Future.

See our small family leave a dream behind.

See the other people coming to live in the New City.

See their Daddy.....

See their Mommy ....

See the vicious circle .....



## Inter-youth encourages community involvement

ON February 15 this year, the Mitchell's Plain Interyouth Movement held a day of activities, including poetry reading, drama, dancing and music in the Lentegeur Civic Centre.

A play, presented by a group of people from Mitchell's Plain, highlighted some of the problems experienced

by people in the area. People from Grassy Park, Nyanga and other areas in the Western Cape, took part in the programme.

A Mitchell's Plain modern jazz group gave a dancing display.

Interyouth hope to have similar activities in the future to encourage community involvement.



## The growth of LYM

IN October of last year a group of young people held a meeting in Lansdowne and formed the Lansdowne Youth Movement (LYM). At the moment, these people including many new members are involved in arranging a newsletter workshop with the assistance of Grassroots.

The reason for publishing the newsletter is to introduce themselves to the community and secondly to recruit new

members. The members of the Lansdowne Youth Movement decided that the theme of the newsletter would be Youth in Lansdowne.

In order to gain material for their articles in the newsletter, they conducted a survey in the area.

The questions in the survey were geared to find out the opinions of the people regarding important issues in the area and also to find out exactly what the

people expect of the youth movement. The LYM intends having regular newsletters so that the people in Lansdowne may express their feelings freely.

On the 16th of December the LYM held

a Cultural Afternoon. The programme included a sketch commemorating the heroes that died in the struggle and a news review of the important events of 1980. They also had a lecture on the Khoi Khoi.

They also plan to have Karate Classes for the younger section of the youth. These classes will teach them discipline and provide them with some form of activity in the area.

We invite all the youth, not only in Lansdowne, to join us and help us to realise our aims and plans for the future.

The aims of the LYM is as follows: firstly to get a united youth in Lansdowne. They also want to provide facilities and relevant activities for the area. They want to get the youth to act on issues in the community whether it be civic or not.

One of the main aims is to have an established group in the area so that if any issue would be a group there to tackle it.

One of the things the LYM found out while conducting the survey is that many of the school-going youth have problems with certain subjects. They therefore plan to offer extra classes for these people, dealing with the required subjects e.g. Mathematics and Biology.

## Bonteheuwel youth on membership drive

DURING the schools boycott last year, students from local schools and colleges held meetings in the community. No formal organisation existed at that time to co-ordinate the activities of the students in the area. Although a parent-student committee was formed, the students felt that there was a need for young people to get together.

Later, when the boycott began to fade and students returned to school, the emotions subsided. Many believed and had a vision without which they would perish. In order to revive student activity in the area, a youth body was started - The Bonteheuwel Youth Movement. Our membership is still small and our main aim is to recruit more people.

During the Septem-

ber holidays last year, the youth movement organised a spring school. In this way we could reach students who were sitting with their noses in their books. We hoped to achieve social awareness among the students, gain new members and help them prepare for the final examinations as this was one of their major concerns. We are also working with the civic association in our area.

We are experiencing problems with venues. Churches are not so eager to allow us to use their facilities as they did in the past.

We appeal to all local students and young workers to join the Youth Movement and so strengthen the youth front in Bonteheuwel.

## Union recognition

From page 1

assured that the company did not discriminate against contract workers or any African workers.

However, union officials obtained evidence that showed the I & J policy had changed to favour the employment of "Coloureds" rather than Africans.

However, in the meantime about 20 contract workers were brought back in October for the cray-fishing season.

According to them they were called to a meeting in the cloak-room by Mr Solomons who told them to join the TLFU. They said they couldn't come to an immediate decision.

There were then called one by one to the office of a member of the company's mana-

gement where they were told that if they joined the TLFU they could come back under contract every year without any problems.

At this stage the jobs of the other dismissed workers had been filled by "Coloureds" who were all assisted by Solomons in filling in TLFU membership forms before being taken on.

Early this year the crayfish contract workers were sent back to the Eastern Cape.

Management has taken the attitude that the Union cannot represent the workers because it is not representative of workers at the docks. The reason why it is not considered to be representative is because almost all the old workers have been got rid of.

**Ronald's**  
OF ATHLONE

Craigant Centre, Lawrence Road, Athlone  
(Opp Post Office) Phone: 67 2606

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TRY US, NOBODY CAN BEAT US

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**FLORISTS**

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Post Office Phone 67-4141

THE FLORIST FOR ALL OCCASIONS



## ADVICE BUREAU

# It's important to know your HP rights

WHEN you walk into a cafe to buy a loaf of bread, you become the owner of it once you have paid the price of the bread. You can do with it whatever you wish. You can eat it or give it away.

When you walk into a clothing shop and buy clothing on credit, you become the owner of the clothing and likewise you can do with it what you wish.

When you walk into a furniture store and buy furniture on hire-purchase you do not become the owner of the furniture until you have paid the price in full.

You cannot sell or give away the furniture until you have paid the price in full.

The Hire-Purchase Act covers deals on Hire-Purchase and sets out the rights and duties of the Seller and the Buyer.

Any hire-purchase deal must be in writing

and must set out the following particulars:—

- the cash price of the goods;
- the finance charges;
- any other charges;
- the deposit paid by the Buyer;
- the monthly or weekly payments;
- the period over which the payments are to be made;
- the description of the goods;
- that the ownership of the goods remains with the Seller until the price is paid by the Buyer.

#### DUTIES OF THE SELLER

The Seller must give the Buyer a copy of the Hire-Purchase Agreement and must send the Buyer a statement of account at least once every two months.

#### DUTIES OF BUYER

The Buyer must give

the Seller his home and work address and the address where the goods are kept when requested by the Seller, Messenger of the Court or the Deputy Sheriff.

When the buyer changes his home or work address or the address where the goods are kept, he is required to notify the Seller in writing within 14 days of such change of address.

If the Seller or Buyer fails to carry out his duties, he commits an offence.

If the Buyer fails to make his payments under the Hire-Purchase Agreement, the Seller can only take action if the Buyer is behind with his payments of more-than one-tenth of the price or more than two instalments.

Before the Seller can

take action against the Buyer he must send the Buyer a letter by hand or by registered post calling upon him to pay the arrear instalments within 10 days and if the Buyer fails to pay, the Seller can then proceed.

Where the Buyer has voluntarily handed the goods to the Seller, the Buyer has 21 days to pay all arrear instalments and in which case the Seller is required to return the goods to the Buyer.

The Buyer has the right, at any time, to cancel the Agreement provided he returns the goods to the Seller, and pays the Seller what loss he had suffered.

#### PAYMENT

The Buyer can, at any time, pay the balance of the purchase price beforehand; in which case he will be entitled to a discount.

The Buyer can re-

turn part of the goods to Seller provided the Seller agrees to accept the return of such goods. The value of such goods is then deducted from the Buyer's account.

The amount of the value of the goods can be agreed between the Buyer and Seller or a Valuator can be appointed to value the goods.

If the Buyer fails to make his payments, the Seller cannot by force remove the goods from the Buyer. The Seller must obtain a Court order for the removal of the goods from the Buyer.

The Court can make any of the following orders:—

a order the return of the goods to the Seller;

b order the return of part of the goods and the remainder of the goods to be retained by the Buyer;

c order that the goods be sold and if there is any shortfall between the amount owing and the amount received, the Buyer will have to pay the difference and if there is any excess, such amounts will be paid to the Buyer.

#### PROTECTION

The Hire-Purchase Act is designed to protect the interest of both the Seller and the Buyer.

The Buyer cannot give up this protection.

Despite this, many malpractices do still take place and it is therefore important for the Buyer to know his rights, in terms of the Hire-Purchase Act.

## Workers lack protection

MOST workers have no protection against being dismissed from their jobs. The law does not stop bosses from dismissing workers without good reasons. All the law says is that if workers commit certain offences, like being drunk or assaulting anybody at work, they may be dismissed without notice.

Otherwise if a boss dismisses a worker he must give a week or a month's notice, or pay a week or a month's wages in lieu of notice. The boss is not even obliged by law to give good reasons for dismissal of workers.

There is a law against victimisation. Victimisation means dismissing a worker because of belonging to a works committee, liaison committee or a trade union (or because of carrying out his duties for that committee or union).

But there is little to stop bosses from victimising workers, because usually workers cannot afford to take their bosses to court. Even when they do, workers usually lose victimisation cases.

So workers have to provide their own protection against unfair dismissals. They must be well organised.

Only then will bosses be prepared to be careful about dismissing workers. Only then are workers in a position to insist on fair conditions for dismissal. For example:

- written warnings to be issued to a worker before he can finally be dismissed;
- reasons to be given by bosses to worker representatives and to the worker who is going to be dismissed;
- notice to be given by bosses to worker representatives when retrenchment of workers is going to be necessary. (This prevents bosses from saying a worker is simply "being retrenched" when they do not want to give the real reason for his dismissal)
- when retrenchment is necessary, the workers with the longest service should be the last to lose their jobs.

The bosses can only be expected to stick to these sorts of conditions if they know that there will be trouble from all the workers if they don't.

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## ADVICE BUREAU

# Sick child needs lots of loving care

WITH parents facing many problems in their day-to-day life, the worry about a sick child can be an added burden. Both parents often have to work to make ends meet.

Whoever is looking after a sick child should be given clear instructions. You don't need a professional nurse's

training to be able to care for a sick child. What you need is real concern and some common sense know how.

Many people are afraid to question doctors and nurses about their children's illness. Remember that you have a right to know what is wrong with your child. After all

the child is your responsibility.

So make sure you have all the information you need before you leave the hospital or clinic.

The doctor may prescribe several types of medicine. Medical people refer to pills, capsules, eyedrops, ointments as well as liquids,

such as cough syrup, as medicines.

Make sure you find out how each medicine works. All antibiotics such as penicillin, tetrax, empicillin, to mention just a few, are prescribed in cases of infection to kill specific germs.

Antibiotics act over a period of seven to ten

days; therefore immediate results are not seen or felt.

It is important to continue giving the antibiotics for the full period. Don't stop after a few days even if the child looks much better.

Medicines can be dangerous if not given exactly as prescribed.



A SICK CHILD NEEDS EXTRA LOVE...

It is important to cool down a hot or feverish child.

High fever in young children may cause fits. Break the fever by sponging the child with cool water.

Do not exceed the dosage. Always use the measuring spoon that comes with the medicine.

Put on light clothes afterwards. The belief that a sick child must be covered with many blankets to "sweat it out" is an old wives tale that can be harmful.

A feverish child loses much body fluid through sweating. Replace this loss by giving him plenty to drink.

Encourage milk, fruit juices or water. At this stage, drinking is more important than eating, so don't force the child to eat.

Try to give a child with a sore mouth or throat yoghurt, jelly or custard.

A sick child will feel refreshed and comfortable after a daily wash.

It may be necessary to help the child to brush his teeth or rinse his mouth.

Adults should not smoke in the same room as a sick child; fresh air is important.

Keeping a child in bed is easier said than done. Sometimes children can be persuaded to lie on a chair or settee in the sitting room.

While feverish, children should be kept indoors. Think of interesting activities such as drawing, puzzles, or cutting up of magazines to keep them occupied.

Sick children need understanding because they are often miserable and irritable. An extra cuddle and tender loving care is an important part of the child's treatment.

So now you know that a sick child needs:

- Medicines given correctly.
- Plenty of fluids
- Body care and fresh air.
- Loving care from everyone in the house.

## Disability grants: All you need to know

IF YOU suffer from a heart disease, T.B. cancer, severe epilepsy, mental illness and any other serious disability and are unable to work, you may qualify for a disability grant.

It is difficult to say exactly when a person is disabled and to give all the details about applying for a grant.

These vary according to whether the person applying is "Coloured" or African.

Here are some guidelines:-

### WHO QUALIFIES FOR A DISABILITY GRANT?

1. A person who has a medical certificate showing that he is permanently disabled or not able to work for at least 6 months will qualify for a DG.

2. The medical certificate must come from a hospital doctor or district surgeon. A certificate from a private doctor is not acceptable. All medical certificates now get sent to a panel of people in Pretoria who decide whether a person should get a grant or not. Unfortunately grants are sometimes stopped or refused even when there is a medical certificate.

3. A woman does not qualify for a DG if she is married to, or living with, a man who is able to work. Only if he gets a grant, can she apply.

### WHERE & WHEN TO APPLY FOR A DG.

1. "Coloured" people should apply at their local Department of Internal Affairs (Coloured Affairs). For people living in Cape Town this is in Broad Rd., Wynberg. The offices are open for new applications every

weekday between 8 a.m. and 12 o'clock.

2. "African" people should apply at the Department of Co-operation and Development in Collingwood Rd., Observatory. The offices are open on weekdays between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m.

### HOW TO APPLY:

When a person goes to apply for a DG he should take the following documents with him (if possible):-

1. The medical certificate.
2. A birth certificate, baptism certificate or any other proof of date of birth.
3. An identity card or Book of Life.
4. A marriage certificate or divorce papers if applicable.
5. If the applicant is a widow she must take her husband's death certificate and a copy of the will if there is one.

### THE AMOUNT OF THE GRANT:

The amount of the grant is worked out by the State Department. It depends on whether the disabled person or his wife are working and how much they earn.

1. At "Coloured Affairs" the applicant's income is worked out by adding the money that he earns and a quarter of his wife's salary. - The full grant of R62 per month is paid out to a person who has no income, and to a person whose

income is less than R252 per year (i.e. R21 per month).

The smallest grant is R25 a month. This is paid out to people earning more than R21 per month but less than R58 per month (i.e. R696 per year).

At Co-operation and Development the grants are worked out the same way but unfortunately the amounts paid out are much lower.

## The pill has some drawbacks

FAMILY planning means having the number of children you want, when you want them.

We have already discussed the Pill in an earlier issue of Grassroots.

There are also special injections to prevent pregnancy. These are given free of charge at the family planning clinic.

### THE GOOD THINGS

The pill has to be taken every day; the injection is only given every three months, so

it is useful for those women who find it hard to remember to take their pills regularly.

Some women also prefer the injection, because nobody else needs to know that they are using a contraceptive.

On the injection you will find, if you are breastfeeding, that milk is more and of better quality. This way you may be able to feed your baby longer.

The biggest problem is that the woman who takes the injection may not have her periods regularly. She may have

no period at all, spotting or heavy bleeding with no fixed pattern.

Once the injection has been given, it will last for three months, so the woman who chooses the injection has to go back to the clinic every three months or else she may not be protected for pregnancy.

Some women gain weight on the injection. If the weight gain is more than 6 kgs another method of preventing pregnancy may be better.

That does not mean that she can eat any-

thing she likes - she should watch her diet, and cut down on starchy foods like cake, bread, potatoes and rice.

Some people get headaches, pimples, greasy hair, cramp or feel down in the dumps on the injection.

Usually these problems are not bad enough to stop the injections.

But if you are ill, and go to the hospital or clinic, remember to mention that you are on the injection.

Another problem is that when the injection is stopped, it may take a long time to fall preg-

nant.

That is why it is better for the injection to be used by women who have completed their families, and want protection for a long time.

If women who are spacing their families use it, they must know that it may take a long time to fall pregnant. Some people may take up to three years, although most can become pregnant in 6 - 15 months.

Those who have never been pregnant should not use the injection for this reason.

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## ADVICE BUREAU

# Breast helps children grow

BREAST milk is the best and finest for babies. It is better than any powdered milk you can buy, and for the first four months of his life, the baby can have mother's milk and nothing else.

## WHY IS BREAST THE BEST?

Breast milk is the natural way young children should be fed, because

- Breast milk has the right amount of body-building blocks that the young child needs to grow.

- Breast milk is always ready, and does not have to be cooked

- It is safe, and doesn't have harmful germs that are often found in feeding bottles.

- Breast milk never goes sour or bad, even when a mother is pregnant.

- It is never too hot or too cold

- Mothers who breast feed their babies have no feeding bottles to clean.

When a mother is travelling with her child, breast milk is always there for him on the journey, and there are no bottles to be carried.

## WHY BOTTLE-FEEDING IS SO BAD.

Bottle feeding is one of the worst things to have come to Africa from Europe and America.

It is dangerous because it often makes babies sick.

It does this in two ways:

1. STARVATION A young baby needs a lot of milk. Powdered milk is expensive and many mothers do not have money to buy enough powder, so

they do not put enough milk-powder into each bottle of water, and do not give their children enough feeds every day, so babies have too little food and become thin.

2. INFECTION. Germs grow rapidly in warm dirty feeding bottles.

If even a little milk is left in a bottle after a feed germs will grow in it.

When more milk is put into the bottle, they will grow in this milk also.

If a baby is given a feed of dirty milk with many germs in it, he will get a runny tummy.

When germs get into a child and grow in him, we say he is infected.

To prevent infection we have to kill the harmful germs in the bottle. The best way of doing this is usually to kill them with boiling water.

Safe bottle feeding needs much water and fuel because bottles must be washed in boiling water to kill the germs.

Safe bottle feeding is expensive.

Safe bottle feeding takes time.

So a feeding bottle is definitely not just a plastic breast.

## WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF BREAST FEEDING?

There are very few real reasons why mothers cannot breastfeed babies.

A mother sometimes says she has not got

Rochelle (7) is three months younger than her brother Bernard (right). They have the same father, but different mothers. Bernard's mother died three years ago and since her death he has been cared for by Rochelle's mother, Mrs Velma Cupido (26). Ms Cupido also looks after another of her husband's children, Salie. He is pictured with another of Ms Cupido's children, Shereen.

Shereen is two-and-a-half while Salie is nearly five.

Ms Cupido insists that she does everything possible to see to it that the two boys from her husband's previous marriage gain weight (Bernard only weighs 12 kilos), but nothing seems to help.

"I think the problem goes back to their babyhood," Ms Cupido told GRASSROOTS. "After their birth their mother was ill most of the time and all the babies were fed on was sugar water."

The importance of milk — especially mother's milk — is stressed in the article on this page.



enough breast milk for her child.

He may cry after he has been fed, and her husband or her friends may tell her he needs a bottle. This is a pity because it is very seldom that a mother does not have enough milk.

If the baby sucks well, and takes all the milk from the breast, it will make more milk, and he will get enough. The baby probably cries more than others because he is more lively.

Some mothers have jobs, and must go to work soon after the baby's birth. They think they have to put the baby on to the bottle for this reason.

It is not necessary: a working mother should feed her child early in the morning, early evening and late at night.

It is best if she can

take baby to work and feed him there as well.

For most people in S.A. this is not possible. In other countries, factories provide crèches where baby can stay,

and mothers are allowed to leave the factory twice or three times during the day to feed their babies.

Money is not taken off for the time they are away.



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# Is it a new Crossroads

IN November last year the first Crossroads families were moved to the new Crossroads township. So far about 100 families have moved already.

The "resettlement" of the people has by no means solved the problems of the people of Crossroads. Much confusion and division

exists in the community because of the movement to the new township.

Dr. Koornhof, in his statement on April 5, 1980 indicated that the following people would qualify for housing in the new township.

- \* Those people who have legal rights to be in Cape Town in terms of Section 10.1 (a) and (b). This means that a person qualifies for housing if that person has been born here and remained here or if that person is working for the same boss for 10 years or if a person has worked for different employers for 15 years.
- \* Contract workers and their families
- \* In cases where the breadwinner is not

formally employed but earns a legitimate living such as craftsmen or those rendering a service to the community.

\* Where there are real cases of hardship an appeal committee was going to be formed to consider such cases.

Some of the Crossroads executive members felt that the people should not move until they were given more concrete assurances from the government that those people who qualify will in fact be housed.

### Assurances

The people wanted specific assurances that contract workers and their families will get housing as well as those who are experiencing hardship.

The appeal committee has not been formed.

Other community members such as the women's committee supported those who wanted to move.

### Disunity

Their feeling was that the people should deal with the problems as they arise.

A resident has said that "the government has tried to sow the seeds of disunity among the people by giving some houses and not others.

# Women bear double burden

MOST women work because the wages their husbands earn are so low that they do not cover monthly expenses. "Our husbands' wages barely cover rent and food. Our wages must go for clothing and all the other monthly expenses."

A worker with four children said that she worked at the same factory as her husband and for the same number of hours. "Both of us work equally hard," she said. "But I get less pay than he."

"Our working day does not end at 5.30 p.m. We still have to go home and cook, wash, iron and look after the children. This is usually done by us women. It is all these small things that weigh us down."

Working women, especially those who are mothers, not only share with male workers problems in the work place, such as low wages and long hours but also have to bear the brunt of the responsibility of keeping the home running.

GRASSROOTS spoke to some of the women, our mothers and sisters, who work at the garment and food processing factories. These are some of the problems they spoke about.

### CRECHES:

A problem facing all working mothers is what to do with their small children while they are at work. The workers complained that there were not enough creches for them to take their children to. Creches, too are expensive and eat into the already small wages.

Because there are so few creches, many women are forced to find and pay a person to look after their children. This also has its problems. As with creches, it is sometimes very expensive and also means having to leave home even earlier in the mornings to drop their children off.

Some workers felt that the factories should provide day care centres for the children of the workers. Such a centre was being planned at one of the clothing factories in Observatory. Others knew of communities such as Bokmakierie and Silvertown where

mothers had got together and were organising day care centres in their areas. These had the advantages of being close to home and being projects initiated and controlled by the community.

### OTHER FACILITIES:

Outside the factories there are no parks, benches and there are no trees under which the women can sit and relax during their lunch break. In most factories, there is a canteen but after a long stretch behind the machines, "we want some space and fresh air", the women said.

Even the older women have to sit on the pavements or stand leaning against the walls and that after being on their feet all day. "Benches and tables set in the fresh air is what we want," the women said.

### TRANSPORT

FOR most workers transport is a problem. Not only is it expensive, but also it usually involves getting up before the sun is up and returning home long after dark because the factor-

ies are usually far from the work place. When talking to working women, it became clear that for them the problem was often even greater.

As one woman said, "They complain and deduct wages if we are a minute late. We have to get all the work done at home and then rush to work. Sometimes a child is ill and the arrangements have to be made for an older child or neighbour to take the child to hospital because the mother will lose money which is desperately needed. Such delays are not understood by the bosses.

Another big problem was the danger of walking the distance after dark, especially on Friday nights and at the end of the month.

Some of the women felt that the bosses should provide transport to the transport stops as this would solve some of these problems and most importantly, save time. For the already hard-working mother who has to return home after work and start

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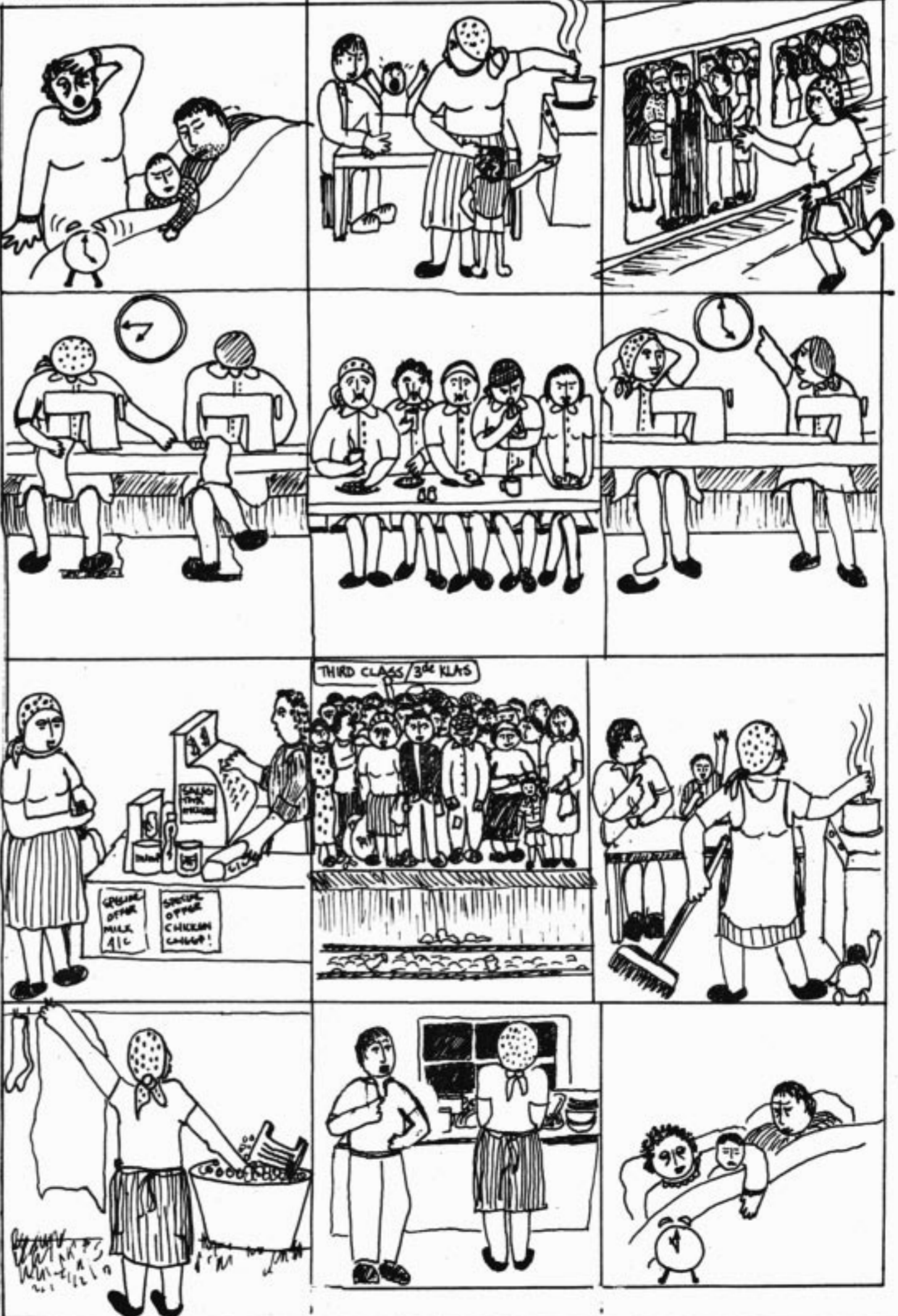
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# Apartheid and normal sport

MR HASSAN HOWA, the president of the South African Council on Sport (Sacos) recently addressed a meeting of the Hanover Park Civic Association Youth Wing at the Hanover Park Community Centre, at the request of the Wing's Recreation Group.

In a wide ranging talk, Mr Howa told about 100 people about non-racialism and answered questions about:

- \* The proposed Irish tour of South Africa and why South Africa should be isolated from world sports;
- \* Laws affecting blacks in this country, like

the Influx Control laws;

- \* The schools boycott;
- \* Cast '81 the petition against the proposed South African tour of New Zealand;
- \* Debating with people from the racial bodies;
- \* The soccer set-up in SACOS;
- \* The cricket set-up in SACOS;
- \* The strength of SACOS, locally and overseas.
- \* The Aims of SACOS;
- \* The Coloured Development Corporation (CDC) and the Urban Foundation;
- \* SACOS' stand on political campaigns.

Other groups from Lansdowne, Kensington and Mitchells Plain were also at the meeting...

Mr Howa discussed the migrant system, and how it affects millions of families who are broken up by these laws.

"Until such time that all these laws are removed, we cannot have normal sport," he said.

Mr Howa explained briefly what Cast '81 is all about. Cast '81 protests against the proposed New Zealand tour and also the Irish tour. A petition has been circulated throughout South Africa which

people could sign to show their solidarity with the protests.

He explained the double standards resolution, saying that it has often been misquoted.

"It merely means that sportspeople cannot have the best of both worlds. They cannot expect to play normal sport and still be accepted on the non-racial side," he said.

Mr Howa was asked if debating against normal sportspeople was not practising double standards. Reference was made to a recent TV debate between the South African Rugby Union (SARU)

and the S.A. Rugby Board.

He said there was no SACOS rule on this and that officials could speak to racial sportspeople with the permission of SACOS.

Mr Howa discussed how the double standards resolution was applied to soccer and cricket.

He said it was ironical that the S.A. Soccer Federation did not want to vote out of power Mr Norman Middleton, who used to serve on the racial Coloured Representative Council (CRC) and Coloured Management Committees (CMC).

He said the double

standards should not be applied rigidly but that every case should be treated differently.

Mr Howa agreed that SACOS should try and convey the idea of non-racialism to the oppressed community, but he said it was difficult with the press, radio and TV against SACOS. "SACOS is growing strong," he said, "both locally and overseas. We have won the support of many countries overseas."

He said the aim of SACOS was not to have everybody becoming members.

"Only people who believe the same can be members," he said.

On the CDC and the Urban Foundation, he simply said: "We don't touch them with a pole."

"Even though SACOS was not a political organisation, they would always give their support to political campaigns like the Free Mandela Campaign," he said.

The Free Mandela Campaign is a petition to gauge support for the release of the imprisoned leader of the African National Congress (ANC), Mr Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners.

Dear Grassroots reader,

In line with our policy of writing news from the community, with the community and for the community, we would very much like to know what YOU, the grassroots person in the community, think about GRASSROOTS. We want you to answer the questions in the questionnaire below, write down any comments, suggestions or criticisms you may have about GRASSROOTS. Please send your completed questionnaire and written comments to: GRASSROOTS

P.O. BOX 181 ATHLONE 7640

Please make a cross (X) in the box with the correct answer.

## Help GRASSROOTS look at itself

How many copies of Grassroots have you read?

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How many people in the house read GRASSROOTS?

Number  Don't Know

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Explain why .....  
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What do you think of the advice page?

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What do you think of news about matters such as housing, rents, etc. ?

Good  Fair  Bad  No Comment

What do you think of news about workers?

Good  Fair  Bad  No Comment

What do you think of the comics?

Good  Fair  Bad  No Comment

How do you find reading GRASSROOTS ?

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No comment

What do you think of the price of GRASSROOTS?

Too little  Too much  Right

Would you or anybody you know help to get GRASSROOTS out to the Community ?

Yes  No

Please supply names and addresses if yes

Would you like to help GRASSROOTS?

By selling it in a busy area

By delivering it from door to door

Would you do this?

For the community for free  on a commission of 2c per paper

# Grassroots feedback workshop

GRASSROOTS is holding an evaluation workshop on Saturday, March 21. We would like to invite representatives from community and worker organisations to attend the workshop.

The workshop forms part of the present re-assessment of the whole Grassroots operation including staffing, news-gathering, production and distributing arrangements.

The aim of the workshop is to get feedback from the community

and worker groups and to decide on Grassroots policy for the coming year.

The following aspects of Grassroots will be discussed:

1. The relevance of Grassroots to community and worker organisations.

2. The content of the paper and the way stories are presented. This will include the language used and the use of cartoons.

3. The printing and production of the paper.

4. Distribution.

5. Suggestions for the coming year.

Anyone interested in attending the workshop should contact our permanent organiser, Lila Patel, at the Grassroots office on third floor of South West House in Greenmarket Square, phone 432117.

A more detailed programme will be sent to workshop delegates later.

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